



# TALES OF HEROISM AND ADVENTURE

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SELECTED BY H. A. TREBLE



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## INTRODUCTION

IT would be true to say that some of the finest literature of the world, in both prose and poetry, consists of tales of heroism and adventure. We have only to think of the great epics of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, of some of the magnificent stories in the Old Testament, of those ancient songs that we call ballads, to realize that this is so. And the reason is not difficult to find. Men's emotions are always stirred by the glamour of an adventure into the unknown and by the spectacle of a fight against fearful odds. We always stand in admiration before Abraham, the courageous pioneer who 'went out, not knowing whither he went'; and before David the stripling who, all unarmed, killed a giant with the simple artillery of a sling and a stone.

The very mention of the word 'giant' reminds us of another thing. Not content with the natural adventures that may befall them, men have always set themselves to invent others that belong only to the realm of the imagination. Hence there has arisen the vast literature, common to all nations, of fairy tale and legend. The earth has been peopled with giants and ogres, gods and devils, monsters and dragons breathing out smoke and fire. Great heroes like Charlemagne and King Arthur have been made almost supernatural in their deeds and stature to satisfy the hero-worship that lies deep in us all. We are not always satisfied with ordinary creatures and ordinary men. When the desire for a real tale of adventure is upon us we like sometimes to escape into a world that we know not of.

True, in modern times, our imagination is apt to take another course. It projects itself into the future and, by enlarging upon the dreams of science, visualizes the excursion of man into other unknown spheres, or his battle against the very creatures of his own inventiveness. There is the legend of the past and there is also the mighty vision of what Mr. Wells has called the 'things to come'. Both have their root in that essential imagination which at times stirs us all. Only a very few men actually tread the untrodden ways; only a few encounter the giants or stand alone to defend what would else have been abandoned. But the others, knowing nothing beyond the common and humdrum chances of life, have always loved to read about the heroic few. We find our adventure by proxy and fight our battles by the fireside, with the pages of a book as our spur and inspiration.

However, the tales collected here are all real. They record the actual courage and daring of actual men. There is nothing of legend about them. The earth—not some far-off planet or imaginary world—is the scene of them all, and in many of them it is, as it were, the real protagonist. The heroes here do not sail in a rocket to the moon: their struggles are with earth's own mountains, deserts, seas, rivers, icy waters, and primeval forests. They do not fight against fiery dragons, but against bears and wild boars and man-eating lions. But the stories are none the worse for that; indeed there is a sense in which they are far better. Truth, it is often said, is stranger than fiction; it is also, at bottom, more thrilling. In not stretching our credulity these stories give us all the greater occasion for wonder and admiration. It is more satisfying, after all, to follow the contest of a real man and a real

lion (especially when the man himself is telling the tale) than to read of the battle of an imaginary man against an imaginary monster. These true episodes, no less than the imaginative story of adventure and the legend, appeal to what may be called the heroic instinct in us; and they have the advantage of being based upon the experiences of heroes who had nothing more magic about them than flesh and blood.



T. E. LAWRENCE

*We taste the full measure of Beduin  
Hospitality*

From SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM

MEANWHILE we would stay with Ali abu Fitna, moving gently northward with him towards Nebk, where Auda would tell all the Abu Tayi to collect. He would be back from Nuri before they were united. This was the business, and we laded six bags of gold into Auda's saddle-bags, and off he went. Afterwards the chiefs of the Fitenna waited on us, and said that they were honoured to feast us twice a day, forenoon and sunset, so long as we remained with them; and they meant what they said. Howeitat hospitality was unlimited—no three-day niggardliness for them of the nominal desert law—and importunate, and left us no honourable escape from the entirety of the nomad's dream of well-being.

Each morning, between eight and ten, a little group of blood mares under an assortment of imperfect saddlery would come to our camping place, and on them Nasir, Nesib, Zeki and I would mount, and with perhaps a dozen of our men on foot would move solemnly across the valley by the sandy paths between the bushes. Our horses were led by our servants, since it would be immodest to ride free or fast. So eventually we would reach the tent which was to be our feast-hall for that time; each family claiming us in turn, and bitterly offended if Zaal, the adjudicator, preferred one out of just order.



As we arrived, the dogs would rush out at us, and be driven off by onlookers—always a crowd had collected round the chosen tent—and we stepped in under the ropes to its guest half, made very large for the occasion and carefully dressed with its wall-curtain on the sunny side to give us the shade. The bashful host would murmur and vanish again out of sight. The tribal rugs, lurid red things from Beyrout, were ready for us, arranged down the partition curtain, along the back wall and across the dropped end, so that we sat down on three sides of an open dusty space. We might be fifty men in all.

The host would reappear, standing by the pole; our local fellow-guests, el Dheilan, Zaal and other sheikhs, reluctantly let themselves be placed on the rugs between us, sharing our elbow-room on the pack-saddles, padded with folded felt rugs, over which we leaned. The front of the tent was cleared, and the dogs were frequently chased away by excited children, who ran across the empty space pulling yet smaller children after them. Their clothes were less as their years were less, and their pot-bodies rounder. The smallest infants of all, out of their fly-black eyes, would stare at the company, gravely balanced on spread legs, stark-naked, sucking their thumbs and pushing out expectant bellies towards us.

Then would follow an awkward pause, which our friends would try to cover, by showing us on its perch the household hawk (when possible a sea-bird taken young on the Red Sea coast) or their watch-cockerel, or their greyhound. Once a tame ibex was dragged in for our admiration: another time an oryx. When these interests were exhausted they would try and find a small talk to distract us from the household noises, and

from noticing the urgent whispered cookery-directions wafted through the dividing curtain with a powerful smell of boiled fat and drifts of tasty meat-smoke.

After a silence the host or a deputy would come forward and whisper, 'Black or white?' an invitation for us to choose coffee or tea. Nasir would always answer 'Black', and the slave would be beckoned forward with the beaked coffee-pot in one hand, and three or four clinking cups of white ware in the other. He would dash a few drops of coffee into the uppermost cup, and proffer it to Nasir; then pour the second for me, and the third for Nesib; and pause while we turned the cups about in our hands, and sucked them carefully, to get appreciatively from them the last richest drop.

As soon as they were empty his hand was stretched to clap them noisily one above the other, and toss them out with a lesser flourish for the next guest in order, and so on round the assembly till all had drunk. Then back to Nasir again. This second cup would be tastier than the first, partly because the pot was yielding deeper from the brew, partly because of the heel-taps of so many previous drinkers present in the cups; whilst the third and fourth rounds, if the serving of the meat delayed so long, would be of surprising flavour.

However, at last, two men came staggering through the thrilled crowd, carrying the rice and meat on a tinned copper tray or shallow bath, five feet across, set like a great brazier on a foot. In the tribe there was only this one food-bowl of the size, and an incised inscription ran round it in florid Arabic characters: 'To the glory of God, and in trust of mercy at the last, the property of His poor suppliant, Auda abu Tayi.' It was borrowed by the host who was to entertain us

for the time; and, since my urgent brain and body made me wakeful, from my blankets in the first light I would see the dish going across country, and by marking down its goal would know where we were to feed that day.

The bowl was now brim-full, ringed round its edge by white rice in an embankment a foot wide and six inches deep, filled with legs and ribs of mutton till they toppled over. It needed two or three victims to make in the centre a dressed pyramid of meat such as honour prescribed. The centre-pieces were the boiled, upturned heads, propped on their severed stumps of neck, so that the ears, brown like old leaves, flapped out on the rice surface. The jaws gaped emptily upward, pulled open to show the hollow throat with the tongue, still pink, clinging to the lower teeth; and the long incisors whitely crowned the pile, very prominent above the nostrils' pricking hair and the lips which sneered away blackly from them.

This load was set down on the soil of the cleared space between us, where it steamed hotly, while a procession of minor helpers bore small cauldrons and copper vats in which the cooking had been done. From them, with much-bruised bowls of enamelled iron, they ladled out over the main dish all the inside and outside of the sheep; little bits of yellow intestine, the white tail-cushion of fat, brown muscles and meat and bristly skin, all swimming in the liquid butter and grease of the scething. The bystanders watched anxiously, muttering satisfactions when a very juicy scrap plopped out.

The fat was scalding. Every now and then a man would drop his baler with an exclamation, and plunge his burnt fingers, not reluctantly, in his mouth to cool

them: but they persevered till at last their scooping rang loudly on the bottoms of the pots; and, with a gesture of triumph, they fished out the intact livers from their hiding place in the gravy and topped the yawning jaws with them.

Two raised each smaller cauldron and tilted it, letting the liquid splash down upon the meat till the rice-crater was full, and the loose grains at the edge swam in the abundance: and yet they poured, till, amid cries of astonishment from us, it was running over, and a little pool congealing in the dust. That was the final touch of splendour, and the host called us to come and eat.

*The description of the feast*

We feigned a deafness, as manners demanded: at last we heard him, and looked surprised at one another, each urging his fellow to move first; till Nasir rose coyly, and after him we all came forward to sink on one knee round the tray, wedging in and cuddling up till the twenty-two for whom there was barely space were grouped around the food. We turned back our right sleeves to the elbow, and, taking lead from Nasir with a low 'In the name of God the merciful, the loving-kind', we dipped together.

The first dip, for me, at least, was always cautious, since the liquid fat was so hot that my unaccustomed fingers could seldom bear it: and so I would toy with an exposed and cooling lump of meat till others' excavations had drained my rice-segment. We would knead between the fingers (not soiling the palm), neat balls of rice and fat and liver and meat cemented by gentle pressure, and project them by leverage of the thumb from the crooked fore-finger into the mouth. With the right trick and the right construction the little lump held together and came clean off the hand;

but when surplus butter and odd fragments clung, cooling, to the fingers, they had to be licked carefully to make the next effort slip easier away.

As the meat pile wore down (nobody really cared about rice: flesh was the luxury) one of the chief Howeitat eating with us would draw his dagger, silver hilted, set with turquoise, a signed masterpiece of Mohammed ibn Zari, of Jauf,<sup>1</sup> and would cut criss-cross from the larger bones long diamonds of meat easily torn up between the fingers; for it was necessarily boiled very tender, since all had to be disposed of with the right hand which alone was honourable.

Our host stood by the circle, encouraging the appetite with pious ejaculations. At top speed we twisted, tore, cut and stuffed: never speaking, since conversation would insult a meal's quality; though it was proper to smile thanks when an intimate guest passed a select fragment, or when Mohammed el Dheilan gravely handed over a huge barren bone with a blessing. On such occasions I would return the compliment with some hideous impossible lump of guts, a flippancy which rejoiced the Howeitat, but which the gracious aristocratic Nasir saw with disapproval.

At length some of us were nearly filled, and began to play and pick; glancing sideways at the rest till they too grew slow, and at last ceased eating, elbow on knee, the hand hanging down from the wrist over the

<sup>1</sup> The most famous sword-smith of my time was ibn Bani, a craftsman of the Ibn Rashid dynasty of Hail. He rode once on foray with the Shammar against the Rualla, and was captured. When Nuri recognized him, he shut up with him in prison ibn Zari, his own sword-smith, swearing they should not come out till their work was indistinguishable. So ibn Zari improved greatly in the skill of his craft, while remaining in design the better artist.

tray edge to drip, while the fat, butter and scattered grains of rice cooled into a stiff white grease which gummed the fingers together. When all had stopped, Nasir meaningly cleared his throat, and we rose up together in haste with an explosive 'God requite it you, O host', to group ourselves outside among the tent-ropes while the next twenty guests inherited our leaving.

Those of us who were nice would go to the end of the tent where the flap of the roof-cloth, beyond the last poles, drooped down as an end curtain; and on this clan handkerchief (whose coarse goat-hair mesh was pliant and glossy with much use) would scrape the thickest of the fat from the hands. Then we would make back to our seats, and re-take them sighingly; while the slaves, leaving aside their portion, the skulls of the sheep, would come round our rank with a wooden bowl of water, and a coffee-cup as dipper, to splash over our fingers, while we rubbed them with the tribal soap-cake.

Meanwhile the second and third sittings by the dish were having their turn, and then there would be one more cup of coffee, or a glass of syrup-like tea; and at last the horses would be brought and we would slip out to them, and mount, with a quiet blessing to the hosts as we passed by. When our backs were turned the children would run in disorder upon the ravaged dish, tear our gnawed bones from one another, and escape into the open with valuable fragments to be devoured in security behind some distant bush: while the watchdogs of all the camp prowled round snapping, and the master of the tent fed the choicest offal to his greyhound.

A. W. KINGLAKE

*The Desert*

*From EOTHEN*

**G**AZA stands upon the verge of the Desert, and bears towards it the same kind of relation as a seaport bears to the sea. It is there that you *charter* your camels ('the ships of the Desert'), and lay in your stores for the voyage.

In a couple of days I was ready to start. The way of providing for the passage of the desert is this: there is an agent in the town who keeps himself in communication with some of the desert Arabs that are hovering within a day's journey of the place; a party of these, upon being guaranteed against seizure or other ill treatment at the hands of the governor, come into the town, bringing with them the number of camels which you require, and then they stipulate for a certain sum to take you to the place of your destination in a given time. The agreement thus made by them includes a safe-conduct through their country, as well as the hire of the camels. According to the contract made with me, I was to reach Cairo within ten days from the commencement of the journey. I had four camels, one for my baggage, one for each of my servants, and one for myself. Four Arabs, the owners of the camels, came with me on foot. My stores were a small soldier's tent, two bags of dried bread brought from the convent at Jerusalem, and a couple of bottles of wine from the same source, two goatskins filled with water, tea, sugar, a cold tongue, and (of all things in the world) a jar of Irish

butter which Mysseri had purchased from some merchant. There was also a small sack of charcoal, for the greater part of the desert through which we were to pass is void of fuel.

The camel kneels to receive her load, and for a while she will allow the packing to go on with silent resignation, but when she begins to suspect that her master is putting more than a just burthen upon her poor hump, she turns round her supple neck, and looks sadly upon the increasing load, and then gently remonstrates against the wrong with the sigh of a patient wife. If sighs will not move you, she can weep. You soon learn to pity, and soon to love her for the sake of her gentle and womanish ways.

You cannot, of course, put an English or any other riding saddle upon the back of the camel, but your quilt or carpet, or whatever you carry for the purpose of lying on at night, is folded and fastened on to the pack-saddle upon the top of the hump, and on this you ride, or rather sit. You sit as a man sits on a chair when he sits astride. I made an improvement on this plan: I had my English stirrups strapped on to the cross bars of the pack-saddle; and thus, by gaining rest for my dangling legs, and gaining, too, the power of varying my position more easily than I could otherwise have done, I added very much to my comfort.

The camel, like the elephant, is one of the old-fashioned sort of animals that still walk along upon the (now nearly exploded) plan of the ancient beasts that lived before the flood: she moves forward both her near legs at the same time, and then awkwardly swings round her off-shoulder and haunch, so as to repeat the manœuvre on that side; her pace therefore

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is an odd, disjointed, and disjoining sort of movement that is rather disagreeable at first, but you soon grow reconciled to it. The height to which you are raised is of great advantage to you in passing the burning sands of the desert, for the air at such a distance from the ground is much cooler and more lively than that which circulates beneath.

For several miles beyond Gaza the land, freshened by the rains of the last week, was covered with rich verdure, and thickly jewelled with meadow flowers so bright and fragrant that I began to grow almost uneasy—to fancy that the very desert was receding before me, and that the long-desired adventure of passing its ‘burning sands’ was to end in a mere ride across a field. But as I advanced, the true character of the country began to display itself with sufficient clearness to dispel my apprehensions, and before the close of my first day’s journey I had the gratification of finding that I was surrounded on all sides by a tract of real sand, and had nothing at all to complain of, except that there peeped forth at intervals a few isolated blades of grass, and many of those stunted shrubs which are the accustomed food of the camel.

Before sunset I came up with an encampment of Arabs (the encampment from which my camels had been brought), and my tent was pitched amongst theirs. I was now amongst the true Bedouins. Almost every man of this race closely resembles his brethren; almost every man has large and finely formed features, but his face is so thoroughly stripped of flesh, and the white folds from his head-gear fall down by his haggard cheeks so much in the burial fashion, that he looks quite sad and ghastly; his large dark orbs roll slowly and solemnly over the white of his deep-set

eyes; his countenance shows painful thought and long suffering—the suffering of one fallen from a high estate. His gait is strangely majestic, and he marches along with his simple blanket, as though he were wearing the purple. His common talk is a series of piercing screams and cries very painful to hear.

In passing the Desert you will find your Arabs wanting to start and to rest at all sorts of odd times; they like, for instance, to be off at one in the morning, and to rest during the whole of the afternoon. You must not give way to their wishes in this respect: I tried their plan once, and found it very harassing and unwholesome. An ordinary tent can give you very little protection against heat, for the fire strikes fiercely through single canvas, and you soon find that whilst you lie crouching, and striving to hide yourself from the blazing face of the sun, his power is harder to bear than it is where you boldly defy him from the airy heights of your camel.

It had been arranged with my Arabs that they were to bring with them all the food which they would want for themselves during the passage of the Desert, but as we rested at the end of the first day's journey by the side of an Arab encampment, my camel-men found all that they required for that night in the tents of their own brethren. On the evening of the second day, however, just before we encamped for the night, my four Arabs came to Dthemetri, and formally announced that they had not brought with them one atom of food, and that they looked entirely to my supplies for their daily bread. This was awkward intelligence. We were now just two days deep in the Desert, and I had brought with me no more bread than might be reasonably required for myself and

my European attendants. I believed at the moment (for it seemed likely enough) that the men had really mistaken the terms of the arrangement, and feeling that the bore of being put upon half rations would be a less evil (and even to myself a less inconvenience) than the starvation of my Arabs, I at once told Dthemetri to assure them that my bread should be equally shared with all. Dthemetri, however, did not approve of this concession; he assured me quite positively that the Arabs thoroughly understood the agreement, and that if they were now without food, they had wilfully brought themselves into this strait for the wretched purpose of bettering their bargain by the value of a few paras' worth of bread. This suggestion made me look at the affair in a new light. I should have been glad enough to put up with the slight privation to which my concession would subject me, and could have borne to witness the semi-starvation of poor Dthemetri with a fine philosophical calm, but it seemed to me that the scheme, if scheme it were, had something of audacity in it, and was well enough calculated to try the extent of my softness. I knew the danger of allowing such a trial to result in a conclusion that I was one who might be easily managed; and therefore after thoroughly satisfying myself from Dthemetri's clear and repeated assertions that the Arabs had really understood the arrangement, I determined that they should not now violate it by taking advantage of my position in the midst of their big desert; so I desired Dthemetri to tell them that they should touch no bread of mine. We stopped, and the tent was pitched; the Arabs came to me, and prayed loudly for bread; I refused them.

'Then we die!'

‘God’s will be done.’

I gave the Arabs to understand that I regretted their perishing by hunger, but that I should bear this calmly, like any other misfortune not my own—that, in short, I was happily resigned to *their* fate. The men would have talked a great deal, but they were under the disadvantage of addressing me through a hostile interpreter. They looked hard upon my face, but they found no hope there, so at last they retired, as they pretended, to lay them down and die.

In about ten minutes from this time I found that the Arabs were busily cooking their bread! Their pretence of having brought no food was false, and was only invented for the purpose of saving it. They had a good bag of meal, which they had contrived to stow away under the baggage, upon one of the camels, in such a way as to escape notice. In Europe the detection of a scheme like this would have occasioned a disagreeable feeling between the master and the delinquent, but you would no more recoil from an Oriental on account of a matter of this sort, than in England you would reject a horse that had tried and failed to throw you. Indeed I felt quite good-humouredly towards my Arabs because they had so woefully failed in their wretched attempt, and because, as it turned out, I had done what was right; they too, poor fellows, evidently began to like me immensely, on account of the hard-heartedness which had enabled me to baffle their scheme.

The Arabs adhere to those ancestral principles of bread-baking which have been sanctioned by the experience of ages. The very first baker of bread that ever lived must have done his work exactly as the Arab does at this day. He takes some meal, and holds

it out in the hollow of his hands whilst his comrade pours over it a few drops of water; he then mashes up the moistened flour into a paste, pulls the lump of dough so made into small pieces, and thrusts them into the embers. His way of baking exactly resembles the craft or mystery of roasting chestnuts, as practised by children; there is the same prudence and circumspection in choosing a good berth for the morsel—the same enterprise and self-sacrificing valour in pulling it out with the fingers.

The manner of my daily march was this. At about an hour before dawn, I rose, and made the most of about a pint of water which I allowed myself for washing. Then I breakfasted upon tea and bread. As soon as the beasts were loaded, I mounted my camel and pressed forward. My poor Arabs being on foot would sometimes moan with fatigue, and pray for rest, but I was anxious to enable them to perform their contract for bringing me to Cairo within the stipulated time, and I did not therefore allow a halt until evening came. About mid-day, or soon after, Mysseri used to bring up his camel alongside of mine and supply me with a piece of the dried bread softened in water, and also (as long as it lasted) with a piece of the tongue. After this there came into my hand (how well I remember it!) the little tin cup half filled with wine and water.

As long as you are journeying in the interior of the Desert you have no particular point to make for as your resting place. The endless sands yield nothing but small stunted shrubs; even these fail after the first two or three days, and from that time you pass over broad plains—you pass over newly reared hills—you pass through valleys dug out by the last week's

storm, and the hills and the valleys are sand, sand, sand, still sand, and only sand, and sand, and sand again. The earth is so samely, that your eyes turn towards heaven—towards heaven, I mean, in sense of sky. You look to the Sun, for he is your taskmaster, and by him you know the measure of the work that you have done, and the measure of the work that remains for you to do. He comes when you strike your tent in the early morning, and then, for the first hour of the day, as you move forward on your camel, he stands at your near side, and makes you know that the whole day's toil is before you; then for a while, and a long while, you see him no more, for you are veiled and shrouded, and dare not look upon the greatness of his glory, but you know where he strides over head, by the touch of his flaming sword. No words are spoken, but your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, your skin glows, your shoulders ache, and for sights you see the pattern and the web of the silk that veils your eyes, and the glare of the outer light. Time labours on—your skin glows, your shoulders ache, your Arabs moan, your camels sigh, and you see the same pattern in the silk, and the same glare of light beyond; but conquering Time marches on, and by and by the descending sun has compassed the heaven, and now softly touches your right arm, and throws your lank shadow over the sand right along on the way for Persia. Then again you look upon his face, for his power is all veiled in his beauty, and the redness of flames has become the redness of roses; the fair, wavy cloud that fled in the morning now comes to his sight once more—comes blushing, yet still comes on—comes burning with blushes, yet comes and clings to his side.

Then begins your season of rest. The world about you is all your own, and there, where you will, you pitch your solitary tent; there is no living thing to dispute your choice. When at last the spot had been fixed upon and we came to a halt, one of the Arabs would touch the chest of my camel, and utter at the same time a peculiar gurgling sound. The beast instantly understood and obeyed the sign, and slowly sunk under me, till she brought her body to a level with the ground: then gladly enough I alighted. The rest of the camels were unloaded and turned loose to browse upon the shrubs of the Desert, where shrubs there were, or where these failed, to wait for the small quantity of food that was allowed them out of our stores.

My servants, helped by the Arabs, busied themselves in pitching the tent and kindling the fire. Whilst this was doing, I used to walk away towards the East, confiding in the print of my foot as a guide for my return. Apart from the cheering voices of my attendants, I could better know and feel the loneliness of the Desert. The influence of such scenes, however, was not of a softening kind, but filled me rather with a sort of childish exultation in the self-sufficiency which enabled me to stand thus alone in the wideness of Asia—a short-lived pride, for wherever man wanders, he still remains tethered by the chain that links him to his kind; and so when the night closed round me, I began to return—to return as it were to my own gate. Reaching at last some high ground, I could see, and see with delight, the fire of our small encampment; and when, at last, I regained the spot, it seemed a very home that had sprung up for me in the midst of these solitudes. My Arabs were busy

with their bread,—Mysseri rattling tea-cups,—the little kettle with her odd, oldmaidish looks sat humming away old songs about England, and two or three yards from the fire my tent stood prim and tight with open portal, and with welcoming look.

Sometimes in the earlier part of my journey the night breeze blew coldly; when that happened, the dry sand was heaped up outside round the skirts of the tent, and so the Wind that everywhere else could sweep as he listed along those dreary plains, was forced to turn aside in his course, and make way as he ought for the Englishman. Then within my tent there were heaps of luxuries—dining-rooms, dressing-rooms, libraries, bed-rooms, drawing-rooms, oratories, all crowded into the space of a hearth-rug. The first night, I remember, with my books and maps about me, I wanted a light. They brought me a taper, and immediately from out of the silent Desert there rushed in a flood of life, unseen before. Monsters of moths of all shapes and hues, that never before perhaps had looked upon the shining of a flame, now madly thronged into my tent, and dashed through the fire of the candle till they fairly extinguished it with their burning limbs. Those who had failed in attaining this martyrdom suddenly became serious, and clung despondingly to the canvas.

By and by there was brought to me the fragrant tea, and big masses of scorched and scorching toast, and the butter that had come all the way to me in this Desert of Asia, from out of that poor, dear, starving Ireland. I feasted like a king,—like four kings,—like a boy in the fourth form.

When the cold, sullen morning dawned, and my people began to load the camels, I always felt loath



to give back to the waste this little spot of ground that had glowed for a while with the cheerfulness of a human dwelling. One by one the cloaks, the saddles, the baggage, the hundred things that strewed the ground and made it look so familiar—all these were taken away, and laid upon the camels. A speck in the broad tracts of Asia remained still impressed with the mark of patent portmanteaus and the heels of London boots; the embers of the fire lay black and cold upon the sand; and these were the signs we left.

My tent was spared to the last, but when all else was ready for the start, then came its fall; the pegs were drawn, the canvas shivered, and in less than a minute there was nothing that remained of my genial home but only a pole and a bundle. The encroaching Englishman was off, and instant upon the fall of the canvas, like an owner who had waited and watched, the Genius of the Desert stalked in.

To servants, as I suppose to any other Europeans not much accustomed to amuse themselves by fancy or memory, it often happens that after a few days' journeying, the loneliness of the Desert will become frightfully oppressive. Upon my poor fellows the access of melancholy came heavy, and all at once, as a blow from above; they bent their necks, and bore it as best they could, but their joy was great on the fifth day, when we came to an Oasis, called Gatieh, for here we found encamped a caravan (that is, an assemblage of travellers) from Cairo. The Orientals living in cities never pass the Desert except in this way. Many will wait for weeks, and even for months, until a sufficient number of persons can be found ready to undertake the journey at the same time—until the flock of sheep is big enough to fancy itself

a match for wolves. They could not, I think, really secure themselves against any serious danger by this contrivance; for though they have arms, they are so little accustomed to use them, and so utterly unorganized, that they never could make good their resistance to robbers of the slightest respectability. It is not of the Bedouins that such travellers are afraid, for the safe-conduct granted by the Chief of the ruling tribe is never, I believe, violated; but it is said that there are deserters and scamps of various sorts who hover about the skirts of the Desert, particularly on the Cairo side, and are anxious to succeed to the property of any poor devils whom they may find more weak and defenceless than themselves.

These people from Cairo professed to be amazed at the ludicrous disproportion between their numerical forces and mine. They could not understand, and they wanted to know, by what strange privilege it is that an Englishman with a brace of pistols and a couple of servants rides safely across the Desert, whilst they, the natives of the neighbouring cities, are forced to travel in troops, or rather in herds. One of them got a few minutes of private conversation with Dthemetri, and ventured to ask him anxiously whether the English did not travel under the protection of Evil Demons.

I can understand the sort of amazement of the Orientals at the scantiness of the retinue with which an Englishman passes the Desert, for I was somewhat struck myself when I saw one of my countrymen making his way across the wilderness in this simple style. At first there was a mere moving speck in the horizon; my party, of course, became all alive with excitement, and there were many surmises; soon it

appeared that three laden camels were approaching, and that two of them carried riders; in a little while we saw that one of the riders wore the European dress, and at last the travellers were pronounced to be an English gentleman and his servant; by their side there were a couple of Arabs on foot; and this, if I rightly remember, was the whole party.

This Englishman, as I afterwards found, was a military man returning to his country from India, and crossing the Desert at this part in order to go through Palestine. As for me, I had come pretty straight from England, and so here we met in the wilderness at about half way from our respective starting points. As we approached each other, it became with me a question whether we should speak. I thought it likely that the stranger would accost me, and in the event of his doing so, I was quite ready to be as sociable and chatty as I could be according to my nature; but still I could not think of anything particular that I had to say to him. Of course among civilized people, the not having anything to say is no excuse at all for not speaking; but I was shy, and indolent, and I felt no great wish to stop, and talk like a morning visitor, in the midst of those broad solitudes. The traveller, perhaps, felt as I did, for, except that we lifted our hands to our caps, and waved our arms in courtesy, we passed each other quite as distantly as if we had passed in Pall Mall. Our attendants, however, were not to be cheated of the delight that they felt in speaking to new listeners, and hearing fresh voices once more. The masters, therefore, had no sooner passed each other, than their respective servants quietly stopped and entered into conversation. As soon as my camel

found that her companions were not following her, she caught the social feeling and refused to go on. I felt the absurdity of the situation, and determined to accost the stranger, if only to avoid the awkwardness of remaining stuck fast in the Desert whilst our servants were amusing themselves. When with this intent I turned round my camel, I found that the gallant officer had passed me by about thirty or forty yards, and was exactly in the same predicament as myself. I put my now willing camel in motion and rode up towards the stranger: seeing this he followed my example, and came forward to meet me. He was the first to speak: too courteous to address me as if he admitted the possibility of my wishing to accost him from any feeling of mere sociability or civilian-like love of vain talk, he at once attributed my advances to a laudable wish of acquiring statistical information, and accordingly when we got within speaking distance, he said, 'I dare say you wish to know how the Plague is going on at Cairo?' and then he went on to say he regretted that his information did not enable him to give me in numbers a perfectly accurate statement of the daily deaths. He afterwards talked pleasantly enough upon other and less ghastly subjects. I thought him manly and intelligent—a worthy one of the few thousand strong Englishmen to whom the Empire of India is committed.

The night after the meeting with the people of the caravan, Dthemetri, alarmed by their warnings, took upon himself to keep watch all night in the tent: no robbers came, except a jackal that poked his nose into my tent from some motive of rational curiosity. Dthemetri did not shoot him, for fear of

waking me. These brutes swarm in every part of Syria; and there were many of them even in the midst of those void sands which would seem to give such poor promise of food. I can hardly tell what prey they could be hoping for, unless it were that they might find now and then the carcase of some camel that had died on the journey. They do not marshal themselves into great packs like the wild dogs of Eastern cities, but follow their prey in families like the place-hunters of Europe. Their voices are frightfully like to the shouts and cries of human beings: if you lie awake in your tent at night, you are almost continually hearing some hungry family as it sweeps along in full cry; you hear the exulting scream with which the sagacious dam first winds the carrion, and the shrill response of the unanimous cubs as they snuff the tainted air—‘Wha! wha!—wha! wha!—wha! wha!—whose gift is it in, mamma?’

‘Once during this passage my Arabs lost their way among the hills of loose sand that surrounded us, but after a while we were lucky enough to recover our right line of march. The same day we fell in with a Sheik, the head of a family, that actually dwells at no great distance from this part of the desert during nine months of the year. The man carried a matchlock, and of this he was inordinately proud on account of the supposed novelty and ingenuity of the contrivance. We stopped, and sat down and rested awhile, for the sake of a little talk. There was much that I should have liked to ask this man, but he could not understand Dthemetri’s language, and the process of getting at his knowledge by double interpretation through my Arabs was tedious. I discovered, however (and my Arabs knew

of that fact), that this man and his family lived habitually for nine months of the year without touching or seeing either bread or water. The stunted shrub growing at intervals through the sand in this part of the desert enables the camel mares to yield a little milk, and this furnishes the sole food and drink of their owner and his people. During the other three months (the hottest I suppose), even this resource fails, and then the Sheik and his people are forced to pass into another district. You would ask me why the man should not remain always in that district which supplies him with water during three months of the year, but I don't know enough of Arab politics to answer the question. The Sheik was not a good specimen of the effect produced by his way of living: he was very small, very spare, and sadly shrivelled—a poor over-roasted snipe—a mere cinder of a man. I made him sit down by my side, and gave him a piece of bread and a cup of water from out of my goat-skins. This was not very tempting drink to look at, for it had become turbid, and was deeply reddened by some colouring matter contained in the skins, but it kept its sweetness, and tasted like a strong decoction of Russian leather. The Sheik sipped this drop by drop with ineffable relish, and rolled his eyes solemnly round between every draught, as though the drink were the drink of the Prophet, and had come from the seventh heaven.

An inquiry about distances led to the discovery that this Sheik had never heard of the division of time into hours.

About this part of my journey I saw the likeness of a fresh-water lake: I saw, as it seemed, a broad sheet of calm water stretching far and fair towards

the south—stretching deep into winding creeks, and hemmed in by jutting promontories, and shelving smooth off towards the shallow side: on its bosom the reflected fire of the sun lay playing and seeming to float as though upon deep still waters.

Though I knew of the cheat, it was not till the spongy foot of my camel had almost trodden in the seeming lake, that I could undeceive my eyes, for the shore-line was quite true and natural. I soon saw the cause of the phantasm. A sheet of water, heavily impregnated with salts, had gathered together in a vast hollow between the sand hills, and when dried up by evaporation had left a white saline deposit; this exactly marked the space which the waters had covered, and so traced out a good shore-line. The minute crystals of the salt, by their way of sparkling in the sun, were made to seem like the dazzled face of a lake that is calm and smooth.

The pace of the camel is irksome, and makes your shoulders and loins ache from the peculiar way in which you are obliged to suit yourself to the movements of the beast; but one soon, of course, becomes inured to the work, and after my first two days this way of travelling became so familiar to me that (poor sleeper as I am) I now and then slumbered for some moments together on the back of my camel. On the fifth day of my journey the air above lay dead, and all the whole earth that I could reach with my utmost sight and keenest listening was still and lifeless, as some dispeopled and forgotten world that rolls round and round in the heavens through wasted floods of light. The sun, growing fiercer and fiercer, shone down more mightily now than ever on me he shone before, and as I drooped my head under his fire, and

closed my eyes against the glare that surrounded me, I slowly fell asleep—for how many minutes or moments, I cannot tell; but after a while I was gently awakened by a peal of church bells—my native bells—the innocent bells of Marlen, that never before sent forth their music beyond the Blaygon hills! My first idea naturally was that I still remained fast under the power of a dream. I roused myself, and drew aside the silk that covered my eyes, and plunged my bare face into the light. Then at least I was well enough awakened; but still those old Marlen bells rang on, not ringing for joy, but properly, prosily, steadily, merrily ringing ‘for church’. After a while the sound died away slowly. It happened that neither I nor any of my party had a watch by which to measure the exact time of its lasting, but it seemed to me that about ten minutes had passed before the bells ceased. I attributed the effect to the great heat of the sun, the perfect dryness of the clear air through which I moved, and the deep stillness of all around me. It seemed to me that these causes, by occasioning a great tension, and consequent susceptibility of the hearing organs, had rendered them liable to tingle under the passing touch of some mere memory that must have swept across my brain in a moment of sleep. Since my return to England it has been told me that like sounds have been heard at sea, and that the sailor, becalmed under a vertical sun in the midst of the wide ocean, has listened in trembling wonder to the chime of his own village bells.

After the fifth day of my journey, I no longer travelled over shifting hills, but came upon a dead level—a dead level bed of sand, quite hard, and studded with small shining pebbles.



The heat grew fierce; there was no valley nor hollow, no hill, no mound, no shadow of hill nor of mound by which I could mark the way I was making. Hour by hour I advanced, and saw no change—I was still the very centre of a round horizon; hour by hour I advanced, and still there was the same, and the same, and the same—the same circle of flaming sky—the same circle of sand still glaring with light and fire. Over all the heaven above—over all the earth beneath there was no visible power that could baulk the fierce will of the Sun; ‘he rejoiced as a strong man to run a race; his going forth was from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there was nothing hid from the heat thereof.’ From pole to pole, and from the East to the West, he brandished his fiery sceptre as though he had usurped all Heaven and Earth. As he bid the soft Persian in ancient times, so now, and fiercely too, he bid me bow down and worship him; so now in his pride he seemed to command me, and say ‘Thou shalt have none other gods but me.’ I was all alone before him. There were these two pitted together, and face to face,—the mighty Sun for one, and for the other—this poor, pale, solitary Self of mine that I always carry about with me.

But on the eighth day, and before I had yet turned away from Jehovah for the glittering god of the Persians, there appeared a dark line upon the edge of the forward horizon, and soon the line deepened into a delicate fringe that sparkled here and there as though it were sown with diamonds. There then before me were the gardens and the minarets of Egypt, and the mighty works of the Nile, and I (the eternal Ego that I am!)—I had lived to see, and I saw them.

When evening came I was still within the confines of the Desert, and my tent was pitched as usual, but one of my Arabs stalked away rapidly towards the West without telling me of the errand on which he was bent. After a while he returned: he had toiled on a graceful service; he had travelled all the way on to the border of the living world, and brought me back for a token an ear of rice, full, fresh, and green.

The next day I entered upon Egypt, and floated along (for the delight was as the delight of bathing) through green wavy fields of rice, and pastures fresh and plentiful, and dived into the cold verdure of groves and gardens, and quenched my hot eyes in shade, as though in a bed of deep waters.

CECIL LEWIS

*Photographing Enemy Trenches*

*From SAGITTARIUS RISING*

NEXT morning I was allotted a machine and given my orders. I was to put in time—the old story. My Flight-Commander was scandalized at my lack of experience. Twenty hours, the total my logbook showed, was no good to him. I was to take my machine and fly it all day. I was to get the lie of the land, go up with a map and locate all the land-marks, so that I could find my way back from the lines in any weather, like a homing pigeon. I was particularly to familiarize myself with the advance landing-ground, so that I could get down safely if the engine should be hit or I should be wounded on patrol. And so on.

So I set off. I browsed round the countryside, visited the FE squadron I had come out with, had my first look at the lines. The next day I went over them at ten thousand, and on my way back got completely lost. I have already explained the difficulties of map-reading. French maps were different from the English ones I was used to. They were nothing like so accurate, and the nomenclature put me off. Still, how I could have missed Amiens with its great cathedral when I was within twenty miles of it at ten thousand feet I don't know. But I did; and at last resorted to the amateur's refuge—to come down and ask where I was.

So my training went on. Practice at formation flying, locating gun emplacements in a given map square, co-ordination, practice at reconnaissance formation, at lamp signalling, at forced landings, and

later, several trips with gunnery officers who came down from their batteries and were taken up to see their targets from the air.

After ten hours of this came my first real job—to photograph the enemy second-line trenches. The lines, from the air, had none of the significance they had from the ground, mainly because all contours were non-existent. The local undulations, valleys, ravines, ditches, hillsides, which gave advantage to one side or the other, were flattened out. All you saw was two more or less parallel sets of trenches, clearer in some places than in others according to the colour of the earth thrown up in making them. These faced each other across the barren strip of No-Man's-Land, and behind them started a complicated network of communication trenches, second-line trenches, more communication trenches, and then the third-line trenches. The network was more complex at the important positions along the line; but everywhere it was irregular, following the lie of the ground, opening up to a wide mesh at one place, closing up, compact and formidable, at another. As positions were consolidated more trenches were dug, and later, when I came to know my own section of the line as well as the palm of my hand, I could tell at a glance what fresh digging had been done since my last patrol.

The surveying of the German line was difficult from the ground. You couldn't very well walk about with a theodolite and a chain in full view of the enemy, so the making of maps was largely a matter of aerial photography. In the spring of 1916, with the big offensive on the Somme preparing, the accuracy of these maps was of the greatest importance. So our

job that day was to go over the front line at 7,500 feet and fly all along the enemy second-line trenches from Montauban, round the Fricourt salient and up to Boisselle, photographing as we went.

If there was ever an aeroplane unsuited for active service, it was the BE 2c. The pilot sat slightly aft of the main planes and had a fair view above and below, except where the lower main plane obscured the ground forward; but the observer, who sat in front of him, could see practically nothing, for he was wedged under the small centre section, with a plane above, another below, and bracing wires all round. He carried a gun for defence purposes; but he could not fire it forward, because of the propeller. Backwards, the centre-section struts, wires, and the tail plane cramped his style. In all modern machines the positions are reversed; the pilot sits in front, leaving the observer a good field of fire aft and using his own guns, which can be fired through the propeller, forward. But in 1916 the synchronized gear, enabling a machine gun to be fired through the whirling propeller and still miss the blades, had not been perfected.

The observer could not operate the camera from his seat because of the plane directly below him, so it was clamped on outside the fuselage, beside the pilot; a big, square, shiny mahogany box with a handle on top to change the plates (yes, plates!). To make an exposure you pulled a ring on the end of a cord. To sight it, you leaned over the side and looked through a ball and cross-wire finder. The pilot, then, had to fly the machine with his left hand, get over the spot on the ground he wanted to photograph—not so easy as you might think—put his arm out into the seventy-mile-an-hour wind, and push the camera handle back

and forward to change the plates, pulling the string between each operation. Photography in 1916 was somewhat amateurish.

So I set out on that sunny afternoon, with a sergcant-gunner in the front seat, and climbed up towards the lines. As I approached them, I made out the place where we were to start on the ground, comparing it with the map. Two miles the other side of the front line didn't look far on paper; but it seemed a devil of a way when you had to fly vertically over the spot. The sergeant knelt on his seat, placed a drum on the Lewis gun, and faced round over the tail, keeping a wary eye open for Fokkers. But the sky was deserted, the line quiet. Jerry was having a day off. I turned the machine round to start on my steady course above the trenches, when two little puffs of grey smoke appeared a hundred feet below us, on the left. The sergeant pointed and smiled: 'Archie!' Then three others appeared closer, at our own height. It was funny the way the balls of smoke appeared magically in the empty air, and were followed a moment later by a little flat report. If they didn't range us any better than that they were not very formidable, I thought, and began to operate the camera handle.

There are times in life when the faculties seem to be keyed up to superhuman tension. You are not necessarily doing anything; but you are in a state of awareness, of tremendous alertness, ready to act instantaneously should the need arise. Outwardly, that day, I was calm, busy keeping the trenches in the camera sight, manipulating the handle, pulling the string; but inside my heart was pounding and my nerves straining, waiting for something, I did not know what, to happen. It was my first job. I was

under fire for the first time. Would Archie get the range? Would the dreaded Fokker appear? Would the engine give out? It was the fear of the unforeseen, the inescapable, the imminent hand of death which might, from moment to moment, be ruthlessly laid upon me. I realized, not then, but later, why pilots cracked up, why they lost their nerve and had to go home. Nobody could stand the strain indefinitely, ultimately it reduced you to a dithering state, near to imbecility. For always you had to fight it down, you had to go out and do the job, you could never admit it, never say frankly: 'I am afraid. I can't face it any more.' For cowardice, because, I suppose, it is the most common human emotion, is the most despised. And you did gain victories over yourself. You won and won and won again, and always there was another to be won on the morrow. They sent you home to rest, and you put it in the background of your mind; but it was not like a bodily fatigue from which you could completely recover, it was a sort of damage to the essential tissue of your being. You might have a greater will-power, greater stamina to fight down your failing; but a thoroughbred that has been lashed will rear at the sight of the whip, and never, once you had been through it, could you be quite the same again.

I went on pulling the string and changing the plates when, out of the corner of my eye, I saw something black ahead of the machine. I looked up quickly: there was nothing there. I blinked. Surely, if my eyes were worth anything, there had been something. . . . Yes! There it was again! This time I focused. It was a howitzer shell, one of our own shells, slowing up as it reached the top of its trajectory, turning slowly over and over, like an ambling porpoise, and then

plunging down to burst. Guns fire shells in a flat trajectory; howitzers fling them high, like a lobbed tennis ball. It follows that, if you happen to be at the right height, you catch the shell just as it hovers at its peak point. If you are quick-sighted you can then follow its course down to the ground. I watched the thing fascinated. Damn it, they weren't missing the machine by much, I thought; but I was left little time to consider it, for suddenly there was a sharp tearing sound like a close crack of thunder, and the machine was flung upwards by the force of the explosion of an Archie burst right underneath us. A split second later, and it would have been a direct hit. A long tear appeared in the fabric of the plane where a piece of shrapnel had gone through. There was a momentary smell of acrid smoke. 'Ess! Ess!' shouted the sergeant. 'They've ranged us!' I flung the machine over and flew west, then turned again, and again, and again. . . . The Archie bursts were distant now. We had thrown them off.

'How many more?' shouted the sergeant, with a jerk of his head to the camera box.

'Two.'

Flying on a steady course is the surest way to get caught by Archie, and we had been, right enough. If we were quick we might snatch the other two photos and get away before he ranged us again. I turned back over the spot, pulled the string and flew on to make the last exposure, when the sergeant suddenly stiffened in his seat, cocked his gun, and pointed: 'Fokker!'

I turned in my seat and saw the thin line of the monoplane coming down on our tail. He had seen the Archie bursts, no doubt, had a look round to see



if we were escorted, and, finding it all clear, was coming down for a sitter.

I got the last photo as he opened fire. The distant chatter of his gun was hardly audible above the engine roar. It didn't seem to be directed at us. He was, I know now, an inexperienced pilot; he should have held his fire. We replied with a chatter that deafened me, the muzzle of the Lewis gun right above my head. The Fokker hesitated, pulled over for a moment, and then turned at us again. The sergeant pulled his trigger. Nothing happened. 'Jammed! Jammed!' he shouted. He pulled frantically at the gun, while the stuttering Fokker came up. I put the old 2c right over to turn under him. As I did so, there was a sharp crack, and the little wind-screen a foot in front of my face showed a hole with a spider's web in the glass round it.

It was Triplex: no splinters; but another foot behind would have put that bullet through my head—which was not Triplex. A narrow shave. Instinctively I stood the machine on its head and dived for home. At that moment, as if to cap it all, the engine set up a fearful racket. The whole machine felt as if it would fall to pieces.

'Switch off! Switch off!' yelled the sergeant. 'The engine's hit.'

I obeyed, still diving, turning sharply as I did so to offer a more difficult target to the Fokker. But, luckily for us, he decided not to pursue. In those days the Huns did not adventure much beyond their own side of the lines, and now we were back over ours.

We saw him zoom away again. He had us at his mercy, had he known. There was a moment of wonderful relief. We laughed. It had all happened

in much less time than it takes to tell, and we were still alive, safe!

'Make for the advance landing-ground,' shouted the sergeant. He was furious with the gun jamming, jumpy at our narrow shave, and, anyway, didn't relish his job with inexperienced pilots like me, just out from home.

I spotted the advance landing-ground—thank heaven I had been down on it previously—and circled to make my landing. It would have been a fine thing, I thought, if that had happened a few miles farther over and I had been forced down in Hunland on my first patrol. I skimmed over the telegraph poles, got down without mishap, and jumped out to examine the machine.

I pulled over the prop. There was a hollow rattle from the inside. Something serious, a big end gone, or a smashed connecting-rod, probably. Anyway, they would have to send out another engine. . . . But we were down! Here was the ground under my feet; the sky above, serene, impersonal; the machine solid beneath my touch, swaying slightly in the wind. All that remained to bear witness of our escape was the rattle of the engine, the tear in the plane, the smashed wind-screen, and the tiny perforations of the bullet holes in the body, two down behind my seat, more in the tail. The sergeant came up.

'Are you all right, sir?'

'Fine! And you?'

'Quite, thank you, sir. I thought he'd got us with that second burst. Always turn, sir, as soon as a machine attacks. It can't get its sights on you so easy. And it has to allow for the traverse. . . . If you'll phone the squadron, sir, and order out a tender and a

repair squad, I'll dismount the camera and get a guard put over the machine. You got all the photos, didn't you, sir?

'Yes. Twenty-two in all.'

'The Corps will be pleased. They wanted them badly.'

Well, we'd got away with it! We'd done the job! If you'd heard me phoning the squadron ten minutes later, you might have imagined from my casual manner I'd been through that sort of thing every day for a month.

## EDWARD WHYMPER

### *The First Ascent of the Matterhorn*

WE started from Zermatt on July 13, 1865, at half-past five, on a brilliant and perfectly cloudless morning. We were eight in number—Croze, old Peter and his two sons, Lord F. Douglas, Hadow, Hudson, and I. To ensure steady motion, one tourist and one native walked together. The youngest Taugwalder fell to my share, and the lad marched well, proud to be on the expedition, and happy to show his powers. The wine-bags also fell to my lot to carry, and throughout the day, after each drink, I replenished them secretly with water, so that at the next halt they were found fuller than before! This was considered a good omen, and little short of miraculous.

On the first day we did not intend to ascend to any great height, and we mounted, accordingly, very leisurely; picked up the things which were left in the chapel at the Schwarzsee at 8.20, and proceeded thence along the ridge connecting the Hörnli with the Matterhorn. At 11.30 we arrived at the base of the actual peak; then quitted the ridge, and clambered round some ledges, on to the eastern face. We were now fairly upon the mountain, and were astonished to find that places which from the Riffel, or even from the Furggengletscher, looked entirely impracticable, were so easy that we could *run about*.

Before twelve o'clock we had found a good position for the tent, at a height of 11,000 feet. Croze and young Peter went on to see what was above, in order to save time on the following morning. They cut across the

heads of the snow-slopes which descended towards the Furggengletscher, and disappeared round a corner; but shortly afterwards we saw them high up on the face, moving quickly. We others made a solid platform for the tent in a well-protected spot, and then watched eagerly for the return of the men. The stones which they upset told us that they were very high, and we supposed that the way must be easy. At length, just before 3 p.m., we saw them coming down, evidently much excited. 'What are they saying, Peter?' 'Gentlemen, they say it is no good.' But when they came near we heard a different story. 'Nothing but what was good; not a difficulty, not a single difficulty! We could have gone to the summit and returned to-day easily!'

We passed the remaining hours of daylight—some basking in the sunshine, some sketching or collecting; and when the sun went down, giving, as it departed, a glorious promise for the morrow, we returned to the tent to arrange for the night. Hudson made tea, I coffee, and we then retired each one to his blanket bag; the Taugwalders, Lord Francis Douglas, and myself occupying the tent, the others remaining, by preference, outside. Long after dusk the cliffs above echoed with our laughter and with the songs of the guides, for we were happy that night in camp, and feared no evil.

We assembled together outside the tent before dawn on the morning of the 14th, and started directly it was light enough to move. Young Peter came on with us as a guide, and his brother returned to Zermatt. We followed the route which had been taken on the previous day, and in a few minutes turned the rib which had intercepted the view of the eastern face from our tent platform. The whole of this great slope

was now revealed, rising for 3,000 feet like a huge natural staircase. Some parts were more, and others were less, easy; but we were not once brought to a halt by any serious impediment, for when an obstruction was met in front it could always be turned to the right or to the left. For the greater part of the way there was, indeed, no occasion for the rope, and sometimes Hudson led, sometimes myself. At 6.20 we had attained a height of 12,800 feet, and halted for half-an-hour; we then continued the ascent without a break until 9.55, when we stopped for fifty minutes, at a height of 14,000 feet. Twice we struck the N.E. ridge and followed it for some little distance—to no advantage, for it was usually more rotten and steep, and always more difficult than the face. Still, we kept near to it, lest stones perchance might fall.

We had now arrived at the foot of that part which, from the Riffelberg or from Zermatt, seems perpendicular or overhanging, and could no longer continue upon the eastern side. For a little distance we ascended by snow upon the arête—that is, the ridge—descending towards Zermatt, and then, by common consent, turned over to the right, or to the northern side. Before doing so, we made a change in the order of ascent. Croz went first, I followed, Hudson came third; Hadow and old Peter were last. ‘Now,’ said Croz, as he led off, ‘now for something altogether different.’ The work became difficult and required caution. In some places there was little to hold, and it was desirable that those should be in front who were least likely to slip. The general slope of the mountain at this part was *less* than 40°, and snow had accumulated in, and had filled up, the interstices of the rock-face, leaving only occasional fragments projecting

here and there. These were at times covered with a thin film of ice, produced from the melting and re-freezing of the snow. It was the counterpart, on a small scale, of the upper 700 feet of the *Pointe des Écrins*—only there was this material difference: the face of the *Écrins* was about, or exceeded, an angle of  $50^{\circ}$ , and the *Matterhorn* face was less than  $40^{\circ}$ . It was a place over which any fair mountaineer might pass in safety, and Mr. Hudson ascended this part, and, as far as I know, the entire mountain, without having the slightest assistance rendered to him upon any occasion. Sometimes, after I had taken a hand from *Croz*, or received a pull, I turned to offer the same to Hudson; but he invariably declined, saying it was not necessary. Mr. Hadow, however, was not accustomed to this kind of work, and required continual assistance. It is only fair to say that the difficulty which he found at this part arose simply and entirely from want of experience.

This solitary difficult part was of no great extent. We bore away over it at first, nearly horizontally, for a distance of about 400 feet; then ascended directly towards the summit for about 60 feet; and then doubled back to the ridge which descends towards *Zermatt*. A long stride round a rather awkward corner brought us to snow once more. The last doubt vanished! The *Matterhorn* was ours! Nothing but 200 feet of easy snow remained to be surmounted!

You must now carry your thoughts back to the seven Italians who started from *Breuil* on July 11th. Four days had passed since their departure, and we were tormented with anxiety lest they should arrive on the top before us. All the way up we had talked of them, and many false alarms of 'men on the

summit' had been raised. The higher we rose, the more intense became the excitement. What if we should be beaten at the last moment? The slope eased off, at length we could be detached, and Croz and I, dashing away, ran a neck-and-neck race, which ended in a dead heat. At 1.40 p.m. the world was at our feet, and the Matterhorn was conquered. Hurrah! Not a footstep could be seen.

It was not yet certain that we had not been beaten. The summit of the Matterhorn was formed of a rudely level ridge, about 350 feet long, and the Italians might have been at its farther extremity. I hastened to the southern end, scanning the snow right and left eagerly. Hurrah! again; it was untrodden. 'Where were the men?' I peered over the cliff, half doubting, half expectant, and saw them immediately—mere dots on the ridge, at an immense distance below. Up went my arms and my hat. 'Croz! Croz!! come here!' 'Where are they, Monsieur?' 'There, don't you see them, down there?' 'Ah! the *coquins*, they are low down.' 'Croz, we must make those fellows hear us.' We yelled until we were hoarse. The Italians seemed to regard us—we could not be certain. 'Croz, we *must* make them hear us; they *shall* hear us!' I seized a block of rock and hurled it down, and called upon my companion, in the name of friendship, to do the same. We drove our sticks in, and prized away the crags, and soon a torrent of stones poured down the cliffs. There was no mistake about it this time. The Italians turned and fled.

Still, I would that the leader of that party could have stood with us at that moment, for our victorious shouts conveyed to him the disappointment of the ambition of a lifetime. He was *the* man, of all those



who attempted the ascent of the Matterhorn, who most deserved to be the first upon its summit. He was the first to doubt its inaccessibility, and he was the only man who persisted in believing that its ascent would be accomplished. It was the aim of his life to make the ascent from the side of Italy, for the honour of his native valley. For a time he had the game in his hands: he played it as he thought best; but he made a false move, and he lost it.

The others had arrived, so we went back to the northern end of the ridge. Croz now took the tent-pole, and planted it in the highest snow. 'Yes,' we said, 'there is the flag-staff, but where is the flag?' 'Here it is,' he answered, pulling off his blouse and fixing it to the stick. It made a poor flag, and there was no wind to float it out, yet it was seen all around. They saw it at Zermatt—at the Riffel—in the Val Tournanche. At Breuil, the watchers cried, 'Victory is ours!' They raised 'bravos' for Carrel, and 'vivas' for Italy, and hastened to put themselves *en fête*. On the morrow they were undeceived. 'All was changed; the explorers returned sad—cast down—disheartened—confounded—gloomy.' 'It is true,' said the men. 'We saw them ourselves—they hurled stones at us! The old traditions *are* true—there are spirits on the top of the Matterhorn!'

We returned to the southern end of the ridge to build a cairn, and then paid homage to the view. The day was one of those superlatively calm and clear ones which usually precede bad weather. The atmosphere was perfectly still, and free from all clouds or vapours. Mountains fifty—nay a hundred—miles off looked sharp and near. All their details—ridge and crag, snow and glacier—stood out with faultless definition.

Pleasant thoughts of happy days in bygone years came up unbidden, as we recognised the old, familiar forms. All were revealed—not one of the principal peaks of the Alps was hidden.

We remained on the summit for one hour—

‘One crowded hour of glorious life.’

It passed away too quickly, and we began to prepare for the descent.

Hudson and I again consulted as to the best and safest arrangement of the party. We agreed that it would be best for Croz to go first, and Hadow second; Hudson, who was almost equal to a born mountaineer in sureness of foot, wished to be third; Lord Francis Douglas was placed next, and old Peter, the strongest of the remainder, after him. I suggested to Hudson that we should attach a rope to the rocks on our arrival at the difficult bit, and hold it as we descended, as an additional protection. He approved the idea, but it was not definitely settled that it should be done. The party was being arranged in the above order whilst I was sketching the summit, and they had finished, and were waiting for me to be tied in line, when some one remembered that our names had not been left in a bottle. They requested me to write them down, and moved off while it was being done.

A few minutes afterwards I tied myself to young Peter, ran down after the others, and caught them just as they were commencing the descent of the difficult part. Great care was being taken. Only one man was moving at a time; when he was firmly planted the next advanced, and so on. They had not, however, attached the additional rope to rocks, and nothing was said about it. The suggestion was not

made for my own sake, and I am not sure that it even occurred to me again. For some little distance we two followed the others, detached from them, and should have continued so had not Lord Francis Douglas asked me, about 3 p.m., to tie on to old Peter, as he feared, he said, that Taugwalder would not be able to hold his ground if a slip occurred.

A few minutes later, a sharp-eyed lad ran into the Monte Rosa hotel, to Seiler, saying that he had seen an avalanche fall from the summit of the Matterhorn on to the Matterhorn gletscher. The boy was reprovèd for telling idle stories; he was right, nevertheless, and this was what he saw.

Michel Croz had laid aside his axe, and in order to give Mr. Hadow greater security, was absolutely taking hold of his legs, and putting his feet, one by one, into their proper positions. So far as I know, no one was actually descending. I cannot speak with certainty, because the two leading men were partially hidden from my sight by an intervening mass of rock, but it is my belief, from the movements of their shoulders, that Croz, having done as I have said, was in the act of turning round, to go down a step or two himself; at this moment Mr. Hadow slipped, fell against him, and knocked him over. I heard one startled exclamation from Croz, then saw him and Mr. Hadow flying downwards; in another moment Hudson was dragged from his steps, and Lord F. Douglas immediately after him. All this was the work of a moment. Immediately we heard Croz's exclamation, old Peter and I planted ourselves as firmly as the rocks would permit: the rope was taut between us, and the jerk came on us both as on one man. We held; but the rope broke midway between Taugwalder and Lord

Francis Douglas. For a few seconds we saw our unfortunate companions sliding downwards on their backs, and spreading out their hands, endeavouring to save themselves. They passed from our sight uninjured, disappeared one by one, and fell from precipice to precipice on to the Matterhorn gletscher below, a distance of nearly 4,000 feet in height. From the moment the rope broke it was impossible to help them.

So perished our comrades! For the space of half-an-hour we remained on the spot without moving a single step. The two men, paralysed by terror, cried like infants, and trembled in such a manner as to threaten us with the fate of the others. Old Peter rent the air with exclamations of 'Chamounix! Oh, what will Chamounix say?' He meant, Who would believe that Croz could fall? The young man did nothing but scream or sob, 'We are lost! we are lost!' Fixed between the two, I could neither move up nor down. I begged young Peter to descend, but he dared not. Unless he did, we could not advance. Old Peter became alive to the danger, and swelled the cry, 'We are lost! we are lost!' The father's fear was natural—he trembled for his son; the young man's fear was cowardly—he thought of self alone. At last old Peter summoned up courage, and changed his position to a rock to which he could fix the rope; the young man then descended, and we all stood together. Immediately we did so, I asked for the rope which had given way, and found, to my surprise—indeed, to my horror—that it was the weakest of the three ropes. It was not brought, and should not have been employed, for the purpose for which it was used. It was old rope, and, compared with the others, was feeble. It was intended as a reserve, in case we had to leave much rope

behind, attached to rocks. I saw at once that a serious question was involved, and made him give me the end. It had broken in mid-air, and it did not appear to have sustained previous injury.

For more than two hours afterwards I thought almost every moment that the next would be my last; for the Taugwalders, utterly unnerved, were not only incapable of giving assistance, but were in such a state that a slip might have been expected from them at any moment. After a time, we were able to do that which should have been done at first, and fixed rope to firm rocks, in addition to being tied together. These ropes were cut from time to time, and were left behind. Even with their assurance the men were afraid to proceed, and several times old Peter turned with ashy face and faltering limbs, and said, with terrible emphasis, '*I cannot!*'

About 6 p.m. we arrived at the snow upon the ridge descending towards Zermatt, and all peril was over. We frequently looked, but in vain, for traces of our unfortunate companions; we bent over the ridge and cried to them, but no sound returned. Convinced at last that they were neither within sight nor hearing, we ceased from our useless efforts; and, too cast down for speech, silently gathered up our things, and the little effects of those who were lost, preparatory to continuing the descent. When, lo! a mighty arch appeared, rising above the Lyskamm, high into the sky. Pale, colourless, and noiseless, but perfectly sharp and defined, except where it was lost in the clouds, this unearthly apparition seemed like a vision from another world; and, almost appalled, we watched with amazement the gradual development of two vast crosses, one on either side. If the Taugwalders had

not been the first to perceive it, I should have doubted my senses. They thought it had some connection with the accident, and I, after a while, that it might bear some relation to ourselves. But our movements had no effect upon it. The spectral forms remained motionless. It was a fearful and wonderful sight; unique in my experience, and impressive beyond description, coming at such a moment.

I was ready to leave, and waiting for the others. They had recovered their appetites and the use of their tongues. They spoke in patois, which I did not understand. At length the son said in French, 'Monsieur.' 'Yes.' 'We are poor men; we have lost our Herr; we shall not get paid; we can ill afford this.' 'Stop!' I said, interrupting him, 'that is nonsense; I shall pay you, of course, just as if your Herr were here.' They talked together in their patois for a short time, and then the son spoke again. 'We don't wish you to pay us. We wish you to write in the hotel-book at Zermatt, and to your journals, that we have not been paid.' 'What nonsense are you talking? I don't understand you. What do you mean?' He proceeded—'Why, next year there will be many travellers at Zermatt, and we shall get more *voyageurs*.'

Who would answer such a proposition? I made them no reply in words, but they knew very well the indignation that I felt. They filled the cup of bitterness to overflowing, and ~~L~~<sup>l</sup>~~ore~~<sup>ore</sup> down the cliff, madly and recklessly, in a way that caused them, more than once, to inquire if I wished to kill them. Night fell; and for an hour the descent was continued in the darkness. At half-past nine a resting-place was found, and upon a wretched slab, barely large enough to hold the three, we passed six miserable hours. At daybreak

the descent was resumed, and from the Hörnli ridge we ran down to the châteaux of Buhl, and on to Zermatt. Seiler met me at his door, and followed in silence to my room. 'What is the matter?' 'The Taugwalders and I have returned.' He did not need more, and burst into tears; but lost no time in useless lamentations, and set to work to arouse the village. Ere long a score of men had started to ascend the Hohlloch heights, above Kalbermatt and Z'Mutt, which commanded the plateau of the Matterhorn gletscher. They returned after six hours, and reported that they had seen the bodies lying motionless on the snow. This was on Saturday; and they proposed that we should leave on Sunday evening, so as to arrive upon the plateau at daybreak on Monday. Unwilling to lose the slightest chance, the Rev. J. M<sup>c</sup>Cormick and I resolved to start on Sunday morning. The Zermatt men, threatened with excommunication by their priests if they failed to attend the early mass, were unable to accompany us. To several of them, at least, this was a severe trial. Peter Perrin declared with tears that nothing else would have prevented him from joining in the search for his old comrades. Englishmen came to our aid. The Rev. J. Robertson and Mr. J. Phillpotts offered themselves, and their guide Franz Andermatten; another Englishman lent us Joseph Marie and Alexandre Lochmatter. Frédéric Payot and Jean Tairraz, of Chamounix, also volunteered.

We started at 2 a.m. on Sunday the 16th, and followed the route that we had taken on the previous Thursday as far as the Hörnli. Thence we went down to the right of the ridge, and mounted through the *séracs* of the Matterhorn gletscher. By 8.30 we had got to the plateau at the top of the glacier, and within

sight of the corner in which we knew my companions must be. As we saw one weather-beaten man after another raise the telescope, turn deadly pale, and pass it on without a word to the next, we knew that all hope was gone. We approached. They had fallen below as they had fallen above—Crozet a little in advance, Hadow near him, and Hudson some distance behind; but of Lord Francis Douglas we could see nothing. We left them where they fell; buried in snow at the base of the grandest cliff of the most majestic mountain of the Alps.

All those who had fallen had been tied with the Manilla, or with the second and equally strong rope, and, consequently, there had been only one link—that between old Peter and Lord Francis Douglas—where the weaker rope had been used. This had a very ugly look for Taugwalder, for it was not possible to suppose that the others would have sanctioned the employment of a rope so greatly inferior in strength when there were more than two hundred and fifty feet of the better qualities still remaining out of use. For the sake of the old guide (who bore a good reputation), and upon all other accounts, it was desirable that this matter should be cleared up; and after my examination before the court of inquiry which was instituted by the Government was over, I handed in a number of questions which were framed so as to afford old Peter an opportunity of exculpating himself from the grave suspicions which at once fell upon him. The questions, I was told, were put and answered; but the answers, although promised, have never reached me.

Meanwhile, the administration sent strict injunctions to recover the bodies, and upon July 19th, twenty-one men of Zermatt accomplished that sad



and dangerous task. Of the body of Lord Francis Douglas they too saw nothing; it was probably still arrested on the rocks above. The remains of Hudson and Hadow were interred upon the north side of the Zermatt Church, in the presence of a reverent crowd of sympathising friends. The body of Michel Croz lies upon the other side, under a simpler tomb; whose inscription bears honourable testimony to his rectitude, to his courage, and to his devotion.

So the traditional inaccessibility of the Matterhorn was vanquished, and was replaced by legends of a more real character. Others will essay to scale its proud cliffs, but to none will it be the mountain that it was to its early explorers. Others may tread its summit-snows, but none will ever know the feelings of those who first gazed upon its marvellous panorama; and none, I trust, will ever be compelled to tell of joy turned into grief, and of laughter into mourning. It proved to be a stubborn foe; it resisted long, and gave many a hard blow; it was defeated at last with an ease that none could have anticipated, but, like a relentless enemy—conquered but not crushed—it took terrible vengeance. The time may come when the Matterhorn shall have passed away, and nothing, save a heap of shapeless fragments, will mark the spot where the great mountain stood; for, atom by atom, inch by inch, and yard by yard, it yields to forces which nothing can withstand. That time is far distant; and, ages hence, generations unborn will gaze upon its awful precipices, and wonder at its unique form. However ~~exalted~~ may be their ideas, and however exaggerated their expectations, none will come to return disappointed!

## HERMAN MELVILLE

### *A Perilous Descent*

*From TYPEE*

[In 1841 Herman Melville sailed round Cape Horn in the whaler *Dolly* and the following year, owing to harsh treatment by the Captain, left the ship with Toby, a fellow sailor of dauntless courage, at Nickahura in the Marquesas Islands. The fugitives intended to go to the friendly Happar tribe but instead found themselves in the adjoining valley of the cannibal Typees. Here they were held in captivity for some months and finally rescued.]

TOGETHER we stood towards the close of this weary day in the cavity of the third gorge we had entered, wholly incapacitated for any further exertion, until restored to some degree of strength by food and repose.

We seated ourselves upon the least uncomfortable spot we could select, and Toby produced from the bosom of his frock the sacred package. In silence we partook of the small morsel of refreshment that had been left from the morning's repast, and, without once proposing to violate the sanctity of our engagement with respect to the remainder, we rose to our feet and proceeded to construct some sort of shelter under which we might obtain the sleep we so greatly needed.

Fortunately the spot was better adapted to our purpose than the one in which we had passed the last wretched night. We cleared away the tall reeds from a small but almost level bit of ground, and twisted them into a low basket-like hut, which we covered with a profusion of long thick leaves, gathered from a tree near at hand. We disposed them thickly all around,

reserving only a slight opening that barely permitted us to crawl under the shelter we had thus obtained.

These deep recesses, though protected from the winds that assail the summits of their lofty sides, are damp and chill to a degree that one would hardly anticipate in such a climate; and being unprovided with anything but our woollen frocks and thin duck trousers to resist the cold of the place, we were the more solicitous to render our habitation for the night as comfortable as we could. Accordingly, in addition to what we had already done, we plucked down all the leaves within our reach and threw them in a heap over our little hut, into which we now crept, raking after us a reserved supply to form our couch.

That night nothing but the pain I suffered prevented me from sleeping most refreshingly. As it was, I caught two or three naps, while Toby slept away at my side as soundly as though he had been sandwiched between two Holland sheets. Luckily it did not rain, and we were preserved from the misery which a heavy shower would have occasioned us.

In the morning I was awakened by the sonorous voice of my companion ringing in my ears and bidding me rise. I crawled out from our heap of leaves and was astonished at the change which a good night's rest had wrought in his appearance. He was as blithe and joyous as a young bird, and was staying the keenness of his morning's appetite by chewing the soft bark of a delicate branch he held in his hand, and he recommended the like to me as an admirable antidote against the gnawings of hunger.

For my own part, though feeling materially better than I had done the preceding evening, I could not look at the limb that had pained me so violently at

intervals during the last twenty-four hours without experiencing a sense of alarm that I strove in vain to shake off. Unwilling to disturb the flow of my comrade's spirits, I managed to stifle the complaints to which I might otherwise have given vent, and calling upon him good-humouredly to speed our banquet, I prepared myself for it by washing in the stream. This operation concluded, we swallowed, or rather absorbed, by a peculiar kind of slow sucking process, our respective morsels of nourishment, and then entered into a discussion as to the steps it was necessary for us to pursue.

'What's to be done now?' inquired I, rather dolefully.

'Descend into that same valley we descried yesterday,' rejoined Toby, with a rapidity and loudness of utterance that almost led me to suspect he had been slyly devouring the broadside of an ox in some of the adjoining thickets. 'What else,' he continued, 'remains for us to do but that, to be sure? Why, we shall both starve to a certainty if we remain here; and as to your fears of those Typees—depend upon it, it is all nonsense.

'It is impossible that the inhabitants of such a lovely place as we saw can be anything else but good fellows; and if you choose rather to perish with hunger in one of these soppy caverns, I for one prefer to chance a bold descent into the valley, and risk the consequences.'

'And who is to pilot us thither,' I asked, 'even if we should decide upon the measure you propose? Are we to go again up and down those precipices that we crossed yesterday, until we reach the place we started from, and then take a flying leap from the cliffs to the valley?'

'Faith, I didn't think of that,' said Toby; 'sure enough both sides of the valley appeared to be hemmed in by precipices, didn't they?'

'Yes,' answered I, 'as steep as the sides of a line-of-battle ship, and about a hundred times as high.' My companion sank his head upon his breast and remained for a while in deep thought. Suddenly he sprang to his feet, while his eyes lighted up with that gleam of intelligence that marks the presence of some bright idea.

'Yes, yes,' he exclaimed; 'the streams all run in the same direction, and must necessarily flow into the valley before they reach the sea; all we have to do is just to follow this stream, and sooner or later it will lead us into the vale.'

'You are right, Toby,' I exclaimed, 'you are right; it must conduct us thither, and quickly too; for see with what a steep inclination the water descends.'

'It does, indeed,' burst forth my companion, overjoyed at my verification of his theory, 'it does indeed; why, it is as plain as a pikestaff. Let us proceed at once; come, throw away all those stupid ideas about the Typecs, and hurrah for the lovely valley of the Happs!''

'You will have it to be Happar, I see, my dear fellow; pray Heaven you may find not yourself deceived,' observed I, with a shake of my head.

'Amen to all that, and much more,' shouted Toby, rushing forward; 'but Happar it is, for nothing else than Happar can it be. So glorious a valley—such forests of breadfruit-trees—such groves of coco-nut—such wildernesses of guava-bushes! Ah, shipmate! don't linger behind: in the name of all delightful fruits, I am dying to be at them. Come on, come on;

shove ahead, there's a lively lad; never mind the rocks; kick them out of the way, as I do; and to-morrow, old fellow, take my word for it, we shall be in clover. Come on;' and so saying, he dashed along the ravine like a madman, forgetting my inability to keep up with him. In a few minutes, however, the exuberance of his spirits abated, and, pausing for a while, he permitted me to overtake him.

The fearless confidence of Toby was contagious, and I began to adopt the Happar side of the question. I could not, however, overcome a certain feeling of trepidation as we made our way along these gloomy solitudes. Our progress, at first comparatively easy, became more and more difficult. The bed of the watercourse was covered with fragments of broken rocks, which had fallen from above, offering so many obstructions to the course of the rapid stream, which vexed and fretted about them—forming at intervals small waterfalls, pouring over into deep basins, or splashing wildly upon heaps of stones.

From the narrowness of the gorge, and the steepness of its sides, there was no mode of advancing but by wading through the water; stumbling every moment over the impediments which lay hidden under its surface, or tripping against the huge roots of trees. But the most annoying hindrance we encountered was from a multitude of crooked boughs, which, shooting out almost horizontally from the sides of the chasm, twisted themselves together in fantastic masses almost to the surface of the stream, affording us no passage except under the low arches which they formed. Under these we were obliged to crawl on our hands and feet, sliding along the oozy surface of the rocks, or slipping into the deep pools, and with scarce light

enough to guide us. Occasionally we would strike our heads against some projecting limb of a tree; and while imprudently engaged in rubbing the injured part, would fall sprawling amongst flinty fragments, cutting and bruising ourselves, whilst the unpitied waters flowed over our prostrate bodies. Belzoni, worming himself through the subterranean passages of the Egyptian catacombs, could not have met with greater impediments than those we here encountered. But we struggled against them manfully, well knowing our only hope lay in advancing.

Towards sunset we halted at a spot where we made preparations for passing the night. Here we constructed a hut, in much the same way as before, and crawling into it, endeavoured to forget our sufferings. My companion, I believe, slept pretty soundly; but at daybreak, when we rolled out of our dwelling, I felt nearly disqualified for any further efforts. Toby prescribed as a remedy for my illness the contents of one of our little silk packages, to be taken at once in a single dose. To this species of medical treatment, however, I would by no means accede, much as he insisted upon it; and so we partook of our usual morsel, and silently resumed our journey. It was now the fourth day since we left Nukuheva, and the gnawings of hunger became painfully acute. We were fain to pacify them by chewing the tender bark of roots and twigs, which, if they did not afford us nourishment, were at least sweet and pleasant to the taste.

Our progress along the steep watercourse was necessarily slow, and by noon we had not advanced more than a mile. It was somewhere near this part of the day that the noise of falling waters, which we had faintly caught in the early morning, became more

distinct; and it was not long before we were arrested by a rocky precipice of nearly a hundred feet in depth, that extended all across the channel, and over which the wild stream poured in an unbroken leap. On either hand the walls of the ravine presented their overhanging sides both above and below the fall, affording no means whatever of avoiding the cataract by taking a circuit round it.

'What's to be done now, Toby?' said I.

'Why,' rejoined he, 'as we cannot retreat, I suppose we must keep shoving along.'

'Very true, my dear Toby; but how do you purpose accomplishing that desirable object?'

'By jumping from the top of the fall, if there be no other way,' unhesitatingly replied my companion: 'it will be much the quickest way of descent; but as you are not quite as active as I am, we will try some other way.'

And, so saying, he crept cautiously along and peered over into the abyss, while I remained wondering by what possible means we could overcome this apparently insuperable obstruction. As soon as my companion had completed his survey, I eagerly inquired the result.

'The result of my observations you wish to know, do you?' began Toby, deliberately, with one of his odd looks: 'well, my lad, the result of my observations is very quickly imparted. It is at present uncertain which of our two necks will have the honour to be broken first; but about a hundred to one would be a fair bet in favour of the man who takes the first jump.'

'Then it is an impossible thing, is it?' inquired I, gloomily.

'No, shipmate; on the contrary, it is the easiest



thing in life: the only awkward point is the sort of usage which our unhappy limbs may receive when we arrive at the bottom and what sort of travelling trim we shall be in afterwards. But follow me now, and I will show you the only chance we have.'

With this he conducted me to the verge of the cataract, and pointed along the side of the ravine to a number of curious-looking roots, some three or four inches in thickness, and several feet long, which after twisting among the fissures of the rock, shot perpendicularly from it and ran tapering to a point in the air, hanging over the gulf like so many dark icicles. They covered nearly the entire surface of one side of the gorge, the lowest of them reaching even to the water. Many were moss-grown and decayed, with their extremities snapped short off, and those in the immediate vicinity of the fall were slippery with moisture.

Toby's scheme, and it was a desperate one, was to entrust ourselves to these treacherous-looking roots, and by slipping down from one to another to gain the bottom.

'Are you ready to venture it?' asked Toby, looking at me, earnestly, but without saying a word as to the practicability of the plan.

'I am,' was my reply; for I saw it was our only resource if we wished to advance, and as for retreating, all thoughts of that sort had been long abandoned.

After I had signified my assent, Toby, without uttering a single word, crawled along the dripping ledge until he gained a point from whence he could just reach one of the largest of the pendant roots; he shook it—it quivered in his grasp, and when he let it go it twanged in the air like a strong wire sharply

struck. Satisfied by his scrutiny, my light-limbed companion swung himself nimbly upon it, and twisting his legs round it in sailor fashion, slipped down eight or ten feet, where his weight gave it a motion not unlike that of a pendulum. He could not venture to descend any further; so holding on with one hand, he with the other shook one by one all the slender roots around him, and at last, finding one which he thought trustworthy, shifted himself to it and continued his downward progress.

So far so well; but I could not avoid comparing my heavier frame and disabled condition with his light figure and remarkable activity; but there was no help for it, and in less than a minute's time I was swinging directly over his head. As soon as his up-turned eyes caught a glimpse of me, he exclaimed in his usual dry tone, for the danger did not seem to daunt him in the least, 'Mate, do me the kindness not to fall until I get out of your way;' and then swinging himself more on one side, he continued his descent. In the meantime I cautiously transferred myself from the limb down which I had been slipping to a couple of others that were near it, deeming two strings to my bow better than one, and taking care to test their strength before I trusted my weight to them.

On arriving towards the end of the second stage in this vertical journey, and shaking the long roots which were round me, to my consternation they snapped off one after another like so many pipe stems, and fell in fragments against the side of the gulf, splashing at last into the waters beneath.

As one after another the treacherous roots yielded to my grasp, and fell into the torrent, my heart sunk within me. The branches on which I was suspended

over the yawning chasm swung to and fro in the air, and I expected them every moment to snap in twain. Appalled at the dreadful fate that menaced me, I clutched at the only large root which remained near me, but in vain; I could not reach it, though my fingers were within a few inches of it. Again and again I tried to reach it, until at length, maddened with the thought of my situation, I swayed myself violently by striking my foot against the side of the rock, and at the instant that I approached the large root caught desperately at it, and transferred myself to it. It vibrated violently under the sudden weight, but fortunately did not give way.

My brain grew dizzy with the idea of the frightful risk I had just run, and I involuntarily closed my eyes to shut out the view of the depth beneath me. For the instant I was safe, and I uttered a devout ejaculation of thanksgiving for my escape.

'Pretty well done,' shouted Toby underneath me; 'you are nimbler than I thought you to be—hopping about up there from root to root like any young squirrel. As soon as you have diverted yourself sufficiently, I would advise you to proceed.'

'Aye, aye, Toby, all in good time: two or three more such famous roots as this, and I shall be with you.'

The residue of my downward progress was comparatively easy; the roots were in greater abundance, and in one or two places jutting out points of rock assisted me greatly. In a few moments I was standing by the side of my companion.

Substituting a stout stick for the one I had thrown aside at the top of the precipice, we now continued our course along the bed of the ravine. Soon we were

saluted by a sound in advance, that grew by degrees louder and louder, as the noise of the cataract we were leaving behind gradually died on our ears.

‘Another precipice for us, Toby.’

‘Very good; we can descend them, you know—come on.’

Nothing indeed appeared to depress or intimidate this intrepid fellow. Typees or Niagaras, he was as ready to engage one as the other, and I could not avoid a thousand times congratulating myself upon having such a companion in an enterprise like the present.

After an hour’s painful progress, we reached the verge of another fall, still loftier than the preceding, and flanked both above and below with the same steep masses of rock, presenting, however, here and there narrow irregular ledges, supporting a shallow soil, on which grew a variety of bushes and trees, whose bright verdure contrasted beautifully with the foamy waters that flowed between them.

Toby, who invariably acted as pioneer, now proceeded to reconnoitre. On his return, he reported that the shelves of rock on our right would enable us to gain with little risk the bottom of the cataract. Accordingly, leaving the bed of the stream at the very point where it thundered down, we began crawling along one of these sloping ledges until it carried us to within a few feet of another that inclined downward at a still sharper angle, and upon which, by assisting each other, we managed to alight in safety. We warily crept along this, steadying ourselves by the naked roots of the shrubs that clung to every fissure. As we proceeded, the narrow path became still more contracted, rendering it difficult for us to maintain our

footing, until suddenly, as we reached an angle of the wall of rock where we had expected it to widen, we perceived to our consternation that a yard or two farther on it abruptly terminated at a place we could not possibly hope to pass.

Toby as usual led the van, and in silence I waited to learn from him how he proposed to extricate us from this new difficulty.

'Well, my boy,' I exclaimed, after the expiration of several minutes, during which time my companion had not uttered a word; 'what's to be done now?'

He replied in a tranquil tone, that probably the best thing we could do in our present strait was to get out of it as soon as possible.

'Yes, my dear Toby, but tell me *how* we are to get out of it.'

'Something in this sort of style,' he replied, and at the same moment to my horror he slipped sideways off the rock, and, as I then thought, by good fortune merely, alighted among the spreading branches of a species of palm tree, that, shooting its hardy roots along a ledge below, curved its trunk upwards into the air, and presented a thick mass of foliage about twenty feet below the spot where we had thus suddenly been brought to a standstill. I involuntarily held my breath, expecting to see the form of my companion, after being sustained for a moment by the branches of the tree, sink through their frail support, and fall headlong to the bottom. To my surprise and joy, however, he recovered himself, and disentangling his limbs from the fractured branches, he peered out from his leafy bed, and shouted lustily, 'Come on, my hearty, there is no other alternative!' and with this he ducked beneath the foliage, and slipping down the trunk,

stood in a moment at least fifty feet beneath me, upon the broad shelf of rock from which sprung the tree he had descended.

What would I not have given at that moment to have been by his side! The feat he had just accomplished seemed little less than miraculous, and I could hardly credit the evidence of my senses when I saw the wide distance that a single daring act had so suddenly placed between us.

Toby's animating 'come on!' again sounded in my ears, and dreading to lose all confidence in myself if I remained meditating upon the step, I once more gazed down to assure myself of the relative bearing of the tree and my own position, and then, closing my eyes and uttering one comprehensive ejaculation of prayer, I inclined myself over towards the abyss, and after one breathless instant fell with a crash into the tree, the branches snapping and crackling with my weight, as I sunk lower and lower among them, until I was stopped by coming in contact with a sturdy limb.

In a few moments I was standing at the foot of the tree, manipulating myself all over with a view of ascertaining the extent of the injuries I had received. To my surprise the only effects of my feat were a few slight contusions too trifling to care about. The rest of our descent was easily accomplished, and in half an hour after regaining the ravine we had partaken of our evening morsel, built our hut as usual, and crawled under its shelter.

The next morning, in spite of our debility and the agony of hunger under which we were now suffering, though neither of us confessed to the fact, we struggled along our dismal and still difficult and dangerous path, cheered by the hope of soon catching a glimpse of the

valley before us, and towards evening the voice of a cataract which had for some time sounded like a low deep bass to the music of the smaller waterfalls, broke upon our ears in still louder tones, and assured us that we were approaching its vicinity.

That evening we stood on the brink of a precipice, over which the dark stream bounded in one final leap of full 300 feet. The sheer descent terminated in the region we so long had sought. On either side of the fall, two lofty and perpendicular bluffs buttressed the sides of the enormous cliff, and projected into the sea of verdure with which the valley waved, and a range of similar projecting eminences stood disposed in a half circle about the head of the vale. A thick canopy of trees hung over the very verge of the fall, leaving an arched aperture for the passage of the waters, which imparted a strange picturesqueness to the scene.

The valley was now before us; but instead of being conducted into its smiling bosom by the gradual descent of the deep watercourse we had thus far pursued, all our labours now appeared to have been rendered futile by its abrupt termination. But, bitterly disappointed, we did not entirely despair.

As it was now near sunset we determined to pass the night where we were, and on the morrow, refreshed by sleep and by eating at one meal all our stock of food, to accomplish a descent into the valley, or perish in the attempt.

We laid ourselves down that night on a spot, the recollection of which still makes me shudder. A small table of rock which projected over the precipice on one side of the stream, and was drenched by the spray of the fall, sustained a huge trunk of a tree

which must have been deposited there by some heavy freshet. It lay obliquely, with one end resting on the rock and the other supported by the side of the ravine. Against it we placed in a sloping direction a number of the half-decayed boughs that were strewn about, and covering the whole with twigs and leaves, awaited the morning's light beneath such shelter as it afforded.

During the whole of this night the continual roaring of the cataract—the dismal moaning of the gale through the trees—the pattering of the rain—and the profound darkness, affected my spirits to a degree which nothing had ever before produced. Wet, half famished, and chilled to the heart with the dampness of the place, and nearly wild with the pain I endured, I fairly cowered down to the earth under this multiplication of hardships, and abandoned myself to frightful anticipations of evil; and my companion, whose spirit at last was a good deal broken, scarcely uttered a word during the whole night.

At length the day dawned upon us, and, rising from our miserable pallet, we stretched our stiffened joints, and after eating all that remained of our bread, prepared for the last stage of our journey.

I will not recount every hairbreadth escape, and every fearful difficulty that occurred before we succeeded in reaching the bosom of the valley. As I have already described similar scenes, it will be sufficient to say that at length, after great toil and great dangers, we both stood with no limbs broken at the head of that magnificent vale which five days before had so suddenly burst upon my sight, and almost beneath the shadows of those very cliffs from whose summits we had gazed upon the prospect.



How to obtain the fruit which we felt convinced must grow near at hand was our first thought.

Typee or Happar? A frightful death at the hands of the fiercest of cannibals, or a kindly reception from a gentler race of savages? Which? But it was too late now to discuss a question which would so soon be answered.

J. H. PATTERSON

*How Roshan Khan saved my Life*

From THE MAN-EATERS OF TSAVO

ON May 12 railhead reached the Athi River, where, as there was a great deal of miscellaneous work to be done, our headquarters remained established for some little time. One day not long after we had settled down in our new camp, I was joined quite unexpectedly by my friend Dr. Brock, who had shared the exciting adventure with me at Tsavo the night we were attacked in the goods-wagon by one of the man-eaters. Now Brock had so far not been fortunate enough to bag a lion, and was consequently most anxious to do so. Shortly after his arrival, accordingly, he suggested that we should go for a shooting expedition on the morrow, and that I should trot out for his benefit one of the local lions. Of course I said I should be delighted—I was always ready for a hunt when it was possible for me to get away, and as just at the time we were 'held up' by the Athi River, I could manage a day off quite easily. So we made the usual preparations for a day's absence from camp—filled our water-bottles with tea, put a loaf of bread and a tin of sardines in our haversacks, looked carefully to our rifles and ammunition, and warned the 'boys' who were to accompany us as beaters to be ready before dawn. I decided to make a very early start, as I knew that the most likely place for lions lay some distance away, and I wanted to get there if possible by day-break. We should thus have a better chance of catching one of the lords of the plain as he returned from

his nightly depredations to the kindly shelter of the tall grass and rushes which fringed the banks of the river. We therefore retired to rest early, and just as I was dozing off to sleep, one of my Indian servants, Roshan Khan, put his head through the slit at my tent door and asked leave to accompany the 'Sahibs' in the morning so that he might see what *shikar* (hunting) was like. This request I sleepily granted, thinking that it could make little difference whether he came with us or stayed behind in camp. As things turned out, however, it made all the difference in the world, for if he had not accompanied us, my *shikar* would in all probability have ended disastrously next day. (He was a very dusky-coloured young Pathan about twenty years of age, lithe and active, and honest and pleasant-looking, as Pathans go. He had been my 'boy' for some time and was much attached to me, besides having a touching faith in my prowess in *shikar*: probably, indeed, this was the reason why he stuck so close to me throughout the hunt.)

We breakfasted by candle light and managed to get several miles on our way towards the source of the Athi before dawn. (As soon as it was thoroughly daylight, we extended in line, Dr. Brock, as the guest, being placed in the most likely position for a shot, while Roshan Khan followed close behind me with the day's provisions.) In this order we trudged steadily forward for a couple of miles without coming across anything, though we advanced through many patches of rushes and long grass likely to conceal our expected quarry. It was most interesting and exciting work all the same, as we never knew but that a lion might the next moment jump up at our very feet. We had just beaten through a most hopeful-looking covert without

success and had come out on to a beautiful open grassy glade which stretched away for some distance ahead of us, when I noticed a big herd of wildebeeste browsing quietly some distance to our right. I knew that Brock also wanted a wildebeeste, so I whistled softly to him, and pointed out the weird-looking, bison-like antelopes. He came across at once and started off towards the herd, while I sat down to watch the proceedings. He made a beautiful stalk, which was rendered really very difficult by the open nature of the country, but still the wildebeeste quickly noticed his approach and kept steadily moving on, until at last they disappeared over one of the gentle rises which are such a feature of the Athi Plains.

I still sat and waited, expecting every moment to hear the sound of Brock's rifle. Some time elapsed without a shot, however, and I was just about to follow him up and find out how things were going, when Roshan Khan suddenly exclaimed excitedly:— '*Dekko, Sahib, shenzi ata hain!*' ('Look, Sahib, the savages are coming!') I was not in the least alarmed at this somewhat startling announcement, as the Indians called all the natives of the interior of Africa *shenzi*, or savages; and on looking round I saw five tall, slim Masai approaching in Indian file, each carrying a six-foot spear in his right hand. On coming nearer, the leader of the party eagerly asked in Swahili, 'What does the *Bwana Makubwa* ('Great Master') desire?'

'*Simba*' ('Lions'), said I.

'Come,' he replied, 'I will show you many.'

This filled me with interest at once. 'How far away are they?' I asked.

'*M'buli kidogo*' ('A little distance'), came the stereotyped reply.

I immediately had a good look round for Brock, but could see no sign of him, so, in case the 'many' lions should get away in the meantime, I told the Masai to lead the way, and off we started.

As usual, the *m'bali kidogo* proved a good distance—over two miles in this case. Indeed, I began to get impatient at the long tramp, and called out to the Masai to know where his lions were; but he vouchsafed me no answer and continued to walk steadily on, casting keen glances ahead. After a little I again asked, 'Where are the lions?' This time he extended his spear in a most dramatic manner, and pointing to a clump of trees just ahead, exclaimed: 'Look, Master; there are the lions.' I looked, and at once caught sight of a lioness trotting off behind the bushes. I also saw some suspicious-looking thing at the foot of one of the big trees, but came to the conclusion that it was only a growth of some kind projecting from the trunk. I was soon to be undeceived, however, for as I started to run towards the trees in order to cut off the fast disappearing lioness from a stretch of rushes for which she was making, a low and sinister growl made me look closer at the object which had first aroused my suspicions. To my surprise and delight I saw that it was the head of a huge black-maned lion peering out from behind the trunk of the tree, which completely hid his body. I pulled up short and stared at him. Although he was not seventy yards away from me, yet owing to the nature of the background it was very difficult to make him out, especially as he kept his head perfectly still, gazing steadily at me. It was only when the great mouth opened in an angry snarl that I could see plainly what he really was. For a few seconds we stood thus and looked at each other; then

he growled again and made off after the lioness. As I could not get a fair shot at him from where I stood, I ran with all my might for a point of vantage from which I might have a better chance of bagging him as he passed.

Now by this time I had almost got beyond the surprise stage where lions were concerned; yet I must admit that I was thoroughly startled and brought to a full stop in the middle of my race by seeing no less than four more lionesses jump up from the covert which the lion had just left. In the twinkling of an eye three of them had disappeared after their lord in long, low bounds, but the fourth stood broadside on, looking, not at me, but at my followers, who by this time were grouped together and talking and gesticulating excitedly. This gave me a splendid chance for a shoulder shot at about fifty yards' distance, so I knelt down at once and fired after taking careful aim. The lioness disappeared from sight instantly, and on looking over the top of the grass I saw that my shot had told, as she was on her back, clawing the air and growling viciously. As she looked to me to be done for, I shouted to some of the men to remain behind and watch her, while I set off once more at a run to try to catch up the lion. I feared that the check with the lioness might have lost him to me altogether, but to my relief I soon caught sight of him again. He had not made off very quickly, and had probably stopped several times to see what I was up to; indeed the men, who could see him all the time, afterwards told me that when he heard the growl of rage from the lioness after she was shot, he made quite a long halt, apparently deliberating whether he should return to her rescue. Evidently, however, he had decided that

discretion was the better part of valour. (Fortunately he was travelling leisurely, and I was delighted to find that I was gaining on him fast; but I had still to run about two hundred yards at my best pace, which, at an altitude of more than 5,000 feet above sea-level, leaves one very breathless at the end of it.

When the lion perceived me running towards him, he took up his station under a tree, where he was half hidden by some low bushes, above which only his head showed. Here he stood, watching my every movement and giving vent to his anger at my presence in low, threatening growls. I did not at all like the look of him, and if there had been another tree close by, I should certainly have scrambled up it into safety before attempting to fire. As a matter of fact, however, there was no shelter of any kind at hand; so, as I meant to have a try for him at all costs, I sat down where I was, about sixty yards from him, and covered his great head with my rifle. I was so breathless after my run, and my arms were so shaky, that it was all I could do to keep the sight on the fierce-looking target, and I thought to myself, as the rifle barrel wobbled about, 'If I don't knock him over with the first shot, he will be out of these bushes and down on me like greased lightning—and then I know what to expect.' It was a most exciting moment, but in spite of the risk I would not have missed it for the world; so, taking as steady an aim as was possible in the circumstances, I pulled the trigger. Instantly the shaggy head disappeared from view, and such a succession of angry roars and growls came up out of the bushes that I was fairly startled, and felt keenly anxious to finish him off before he could charge out and cover the short distance which separated us. I therefore fired half

a dozen shots into the bushes at the spot where I imagined he lay, and soon the growling and commotion ceased, and all was still. I was confident the brute was dead, so I called up one of the men to stay and watch the place, while I again rushed off at full speed—jumping over such rocks and bushes as came in my way—to have a shot at a lioness that was still in sight.

By this time my followers numbered about thirty men, as when one is hunting in these plains natives seem to spring from nowhere in the most mysterious manner, and attach themselves to one in the hope of obtaining some portion of the kill. By signal I ordered them to advance in line on the thicket in which the lioness had just taken refuge, while I took up my position on one side, so as to obtain a good shot when she broke covert. The line of natives shouting their native cries and striking their spears together soon disturbed her, and out she sprang into the open, making for a clump of rushes close to the river. Unfortunately she broke out at the most unfavourable spot from my point of view, as some of the natives masked my fire, and I had consequently to wait until she got almost to the edge of the rushes. Whether or not I hit her then I cannot say; at any rate, she made good her escape into the reeds, where I decided to leave her until Brock should arrive.

I now retraced my steps towards the spot where I had shot the lion, expecting, of course, to find the man I had told to watch him still on guard. To my intense vexation, however, I found that my sentry had deserted his post and had joined the other men of the party, having become frightened when left by himself. The result of his disobedience was that now I could



not tell where lay the dead lion—or, rather, the lion which I believed to be dead; but I had no intention of losing so fine a trophy, so I began a systematic search, dividing the jungle into strips, and thus going over the whole place thoroughly. The task of finding him, however, was not so easy as might be thought; the chase after the lioness had taken us some distance from where I had shot him, and as there were numbers of trees about similar to that under which he fell, it was really a very difficult matter to hit upon the right place. At last one of the men sang out joyfully that he had found the lion at the same time running away from the spot as hard as ever he could. A number of those nearest to him, both Indians and natives, had more courage or curiosity, and went up to have a look at the beast. I shouted to them as I hurried along to be careful and not to go too near, in case by any chance he might not be dead; but they paid little heed to the warning, and by the time I got up, some half-dozen of them were gathered in a group at the lion's tail, gesticulating wildly and chattering each in his own language, and all very pleased and excited. On getting near I asked if the lion was dead, and was told that he was nearly so, but that he still breathed. He was lying at full length on his side, and when I saw him at close quarters I was more delighted than I can tell, for he was indeed a very fine specimen. For a moment or two I stood with the group of natives, admiring him. He still breathed regularly, as his flanks heaved with each respiration; but as he lay absolutely still with all the men jabbering within a yard of him, I assumed that he was on the point of death and unable to rise. Possessed with this belief, I very foolishly allowed my curiosity to run away with

my caution, and stepped round to have a look at his head. The moment I came into his view, however, he suddenly became possessed of a diabolical ferocity. With a great roar he sprang to his feet, as if he were quite unhurt; his eyes blazed with fury, and his lips were drawn well back, exposing his tusks and teeth in a way I hope never to witness again. When this perilous situation so unexpectedly developed itself, I was not more than three paces away from him.

The instant the lion rose, all the men fled as if the Evil One himself were after them, and made for the nearest trees—with one exception, for as I took a step backwards, keeping my eye on the infuriated animal, I almost trod on Roshan Khan, who had still remained close behind me. Fortunately for me, I had approached the lion's head with my rifle ready, and as I stepped back I fired. The impact of the .303 bullet threw him back on his haunches just as he was in the act of springing, but in an instant he was up again and coming for me so quickly that I had not even time to raise my rifle to my shoulder, but fired point blank at him from my hip, delaying him for a second or so as before. He was up again like lightning, and again at the muzzle of my rifle; and this time I thought that nothing on earth could save me, as I was almost within his clutches. Help came from an unexpected and unconscious quarter, for just at this critical moment Roshan Khan seemed all at once to realise the danger of the situation, and suddenly fled for his life, screaming and shrieking with all his might. Beyond all question this movement saved me, for the sight of something darting away from him diverted the lion's attention from me, and following his natural instinct, he gave chase instead to the yelling fugitive.

Roshan Khan having thus unwittingly rescued me from my perilous position, it now became my turn to do all I could to save him, if this were possible. In far less time than it takes to tell the story, I had swung round after the pursuing lion, levelled my rifle and fired; but whether because of the speed at which he was going, or because of my over-anxiety to save my 'boy', I missed him completely, and saw the bullet raise the dust at the heels of a flying Masai. Like lightning I loaded again from the magazine, but now the lion was within a spring of his prey, and it seemed hopeless to expect to save poor Roshan Khan from his clutches. Just at this moment, however, the terrified youth caught sight of the brute over his left shoulder, and providentially made a quick swerve to the right. As the lion turned to follow him, he came broadside on to me, and just as he had Roshan Khan within striking distance and was about to seize him, he dropped in the middle of what would otherwise assuredly have been the fatal spring—bowled over with a broken shoulder. This gave me time to run up and give him a final shot, and with a deep roar he fell back full length on the grass, stone-dead.

I then looked round to see if Roshan Khan was all right, as I was not sure whether the lion had succeeded in mauling him or not. The sight that met my eyes turned tragedy into comedy in an instant, and made me roar with laughter; indeed, it was so utterly absurd that I threw myself down on the grass and rolled over and over, convulsed with uncontrollable mirth. For there was Roshan Khan, half-way up a thorn tree, earnestly bent on getting to the very topmost branch as quickly as ever he could climb; not a moment,

indeed, was he able to spare to cast a glance at what was happening beneath. His puggaree had been torn off by one thorn, and waved gracefully in the breeze; a fancy waistcoat adorned another spiky branch, and his long white cotton gown was torn to ribbons in his mad endeavour to put as great a distance as possible between himself and the dead lion. As soon as I could stop laughing, I called out to him to come down, but quite in vain. There was no stopping him, indeed, until he had reached the very top of the tree; and even then he could scarcely be induced to come down again. Poor fellow, he had been thoroughly terrified, and little wonder.

My followers now began to emerge from the shelter of the various trees and bushes where they had concealed themselves after their wild flight from the resuscitated lion, and crowded round his dead body in the highest spirits. The Masai, especially, seemed delighted at the way in which he had been defeated, and to my surprise and amusement proved themselves excellent mimics, some three or four of them beginning at once to act the whole adventure. One played the part of the lion and jumped growling at a comrade, who immediately ran backwards just as I had done, shouting 'Ta, Ta, Ta,' and cracking his fingers to represent the rifle-shots. Finally the whole audience roared with delight when another bolted as fast as he could to Roshan Khan's tree with the pseudo lion roaring after him. At the end of these proceedings up came Brock, who had been attracted to the place by the sound of the firing. He was much astonished to see my fine dead lion lying stretched out, and his first remark was, 'You *are* a lucky beggar!' Afterwards, when he heard the full story of the adventure, he

rightly considered me even more lucky than he had first thought.

Our next business was to go back to the lioness which I had first shot and left for dead. Like her mate, however, she was still very much alive when we reached her, so I stalked carefully up to a neighbouring tree, from whose shelter I gave her the finishing shot. We then left Mahina and the other men to skin the two beasts, and went on to the rushes where the second lioness had taken cover. Here all our efforts to turn her out failed, so we reluctantly abandoned the chase and were fated to see no more lions that day.

Our only other adventure was with a stolid old rhino, who gave me rather a fright and induced Brock to indulge in some lively exercise. Separated by about a hundred yards or so, we were walking over the undulating ground a short distance from the river, when, on gaining the top of a gentle rise, I suddenly came upon the ungainly animal as it lay wallowing in a hollow. It jumped to its feet instantly and came for where I stood, and as I had no wish to shoot it, I made a dash for cover round the knoll. On reaching the top of the rise, the rhino winded my companion and at once changed its direction and made for him. Brock lost no time in putting on his best pace in an endeavour to reach the shelter of a tree which stood some distance off, while I sat down and watched the exciting race. I thought it would be a pretty close thing, but felt confident that Brock, who was very active, would manage to pull it off. When he got about half-way to the tree, however, he turned to see how far his pursuer was behind, and in doing so put his foot in a hole in the ground, and to my horror fell head over heels, his rifle flying from his grasp. I

expected the great brute to be on him in a moment, but to my intense relief the old rhino stopped dead when he saw the catastrophe which had taken place, and then, failing (I suppose) to understand it, suddenly made off in the opposite direction as hard as he could go. In the meantime Brock had got to his feet again, and raced for dear life to the tree without ever looking round. It was a most comical sight, and I sat on the rise and for the second time that day laughed till my sides ached.

After this we returned to the scene of my morning's adventure, where we found that the invaluable Mahina had finished skinning the two lions. We accordingly made our way back to camp with our trophies, all of us, with perhaps the exception of Roshan Khan, well satisfied with the day's outing. Whenever afterwards I wanted to chaff this 'boy', I had only to ask whether he would like to come and see some more *shikar*. He would then look very solemn, shake his head emphatically and assure me '*Kabhi nahin, Sahib*' ('Never again, Sir').

## THOMAS WOOD

### *Pearls, Bullocks, and Baobabs*

*From COBBERS*

[I see pearls at Broome and bullocks and baobabs at Derby.  
Describes how I saw magic in the sea and met a philosopher.]

#### I

**B**ROOME.

The place where the pearls come from. The port which the luggers make, laden with shell. The home for a floating population of Japanese, Chinese, Malays, Koepangers,<sup>1</sup> binghis,<sup>2</sup> half-castes, and whites; who try for a living, and hope for wealth, among reefs and shoals, heat and sand-flies; working hard, dying quick, and buried before night in a graveyard which divides them, even in death, into Anglicans, Methodists, Catholics, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Jews, and Doubtful.

Broome is not Juan Fernandez, or Nombre de Dios, or Tidore, or the Galapagos—magical names from a world which seems as remote as it did in Drake's time; but it has something in common with them. You can say this now that you are home again, for they are hard-headed men in Broome; and any mention of magic or romance—if you so far forgot yourself—would make them stare, and say kindly, that the sun was a cow till you got used to it, and what about another spot? The implication is that you are free to

<sup>1</sup> Natives of Koepang (Kupang) in Timor.

<sup>2</sup> The name generally used in the North for the aboriginals.

keep your illusions about the place; they have lost theirs, as men will who stay too long anywhere. The end of the rainbow is always over the hill.

But I am glad I went to look for it in Broome. Even when you have reached Australia, making a conventional landfall, the place is so far away, so legendary, that you are tempted to think it is nothing more than a name on the chart and a home for tall yarns. But be patient. Last week it was the next port of call. Yesterday the Malays got cargo on deck ready for landing—boring plant and a dynamo, and a dozen barrels of beer. Last night the Captain said we ought to be alongside at six, if there's enough water at the jetty. And this morning came a thump on the cabin door and the Purser's hearty voice, 'Rise and shine, doc! Here's Broome.'

The sea was green, like palest jade, and the sky was lavender. A lugger drifted by. Every rope, every stay, every seam in her deck was vivid in that radiant sunshine. Her people stood like statues and watched us, shading their eyes. Black statues, with crispy wool for hair. One man had a red scarf round his head. Inshore was a cluster of small craft and a schooner at anchor. Behind her, a beach and sandstone rocks, copper against the polished glass of the sea. There was a tree or two; some roofs, achingly white; a jetty dotted with wagons; some men sitting on sacks. We leaned over the rail and looked and looked. So this was Broome.

An engine and a truck, whose bleached unpainted timbers looked like salvage from a galleon, steered along the jetty, crossed the foreshore, and after a mile of indecision stopped for good alongside a shed. Nothing else was in sight but sand and tussocky grass.



Friendly souls explained that she was only doing the short trip to-day, being Sunday, but the town wasn't more than half a mile off. Straight on up the street. And the Pearling Inspector lived in the house with the hedge. I couldn't miss it.

I had heard this encouragement before and knew its value, but for once it did not let me down. Here was the hedge. Hibiscus? Too hot to make sure. I thumped on a table in the veranda, hopefully. I thumped again, and sat down. At least there was shade, though the air was heavy and damp. And still, wonderfully still. The palm by the steps might have been cast in bronze. Over the hedge I could see the street they had talked about. It was a stretch of rough grass as wide as a cricket field, with a path and a railway track in the middle and some houses on the far side, harshly white in this straight hard glare. A beetle sailed in through the jalousies and buzzed. He was the only person with energy enough to break the silence, except me, and my time was more precious than his. I thumped again.

The Pearling Inspector appeared in pyjamas, apologizing, with his chin covered in lather. But why not pyjamas? I asked, on a Sunday morning; and such elegant pyjamas too! Their owner read my credentials, smiling through his soap. I wanted to see luggers, shell, pearls? Give him ten minutes and his time was mine. The flourish of his razor as he skipped through the door intimated that all Broome would be thrown at my feet.

We began, naturally, at the 'Roebuck'. I say naturally because life in the outposts centres round an hotel. That does not mean that men in the outposts do nothing but drink. Some do; and the sun kills

them. Others ride in for an occasional burst, throw a cheque across the counter saying 'Wake me up when that's done,' and proceed to drown all memory of how they earned it in one gloriously comprehensive non-stop binge. They stagger away, broke; but who is to judge them? Not suburbia. And such whole-heartedness is rare. Most men prefer to keep alive, and solvent. They want to see their friends, and hear the news over a drink or two, in the cool. The natural meeting-place is the hotel.

The men at the 'Roebuck', sitting on the steps in their shirt-sleeves, bade us good-day with the unfailing courtesy of the North, and asked what we were having. The East went by while we had it—Malays in groups and a Japanese or two; and across the way was a Chinaman's shop with the owner at the door, bland and ready for business. But Australia came back on the foreshore, the Australia of the pioneer: rusty tins and a railway line. This was where that train came then, when she was doing the long trip, all the way from the big ships' jetty to the luggers' beach. A good two miles. Even on week-days she could get no farther, for the line died by the pearling sheds, untidily, old rope and seaweed piled on its grave. The tombstone was an anchor.

The luggers' beach had a jetty of its own, and at the seaward end of it, a long way off, a black boy was waiting in a dinghy to row us out to the fleet. I am calling it a jetty now, because Broome does; what I called it when I was going out to the dinghy surprised me at the time. I did not know I had such powers of imagery. A jetty should be firm, safe, solid. This derelict put me in mind of that classic definition of a net—a lot of holes tied up with string. Say laths for

string and you have it; use the imagination I wished I had not got just then and you can see it—slips of matchwood, bleached and split, whose silvery frailty said the end was near. Below them, green chasms. Don't look down. Never mind the sweat trickling into your eyes. Keep your mind off sharks. Think of that anchor, the symbol of hope. Once aboard the lugger. . . .

The dinghy was solid, at any rate. We sat in her broad and comfortable stern-sheets, where the wood was hot to the touch, and stretched out our legs luxuriously. The black boy grunted at his oars, sweat hopping off the end of his nose. But he grinned; so I was content to watch it hop. The sea was asleep. We rose and fell with the quiet of its breathing.

You can board a lugger by standing on the thwarts of a dinghy; and once you are on her deck nothing in the world will prevent a sea from sweeping you off it except your sense of balance or a grab at a stay. And there is room for everything but the crew. Forrard is a fo'c'sle for five men, packed tight. Aft is a cockpit as big as a tea chest. This is a fair comparison, not a picturesque phrase; for the occupant is a Japanese, who squats, with no need for head-room. He lives alone as a skipper should, and spartanly. To comfort him through a three months' voyage he has a mat on the floor and a picture on the bulkhead—cherry-blossom time, or maidens crossing a bridge—and for self-expression he has a writing brush and a penny bottle of ink.

Amidships is a well. It houses a pump for giving the diver air, his tow-line, boots, and rubber suit, and a goggle-eyed helmet which took me back in a jump to Portsmouth and the salvage men. For some years

every lugger carried a pumping-engine, which enabled divers to work in pairs. Now the engines are gone. They saved wages and they saved sweat, but they killed prices. Broome solved its own problem of over-production by going back to hand-pumps—one lugger, one diver. Upon the skill and judgement of this one man the success of a cruise depends.

They lower him down to the bottom of the sea and drag him along it, the lugger just under way. When he sees an oyster he twitches his line, signalling to heave-to while he puts it in a bag slung round his neck. The pearl oyster has little in common with Colchester natives. He is as big as a football, grows a long trailing beard, and shuns society. A diver may be dragged many a weary mile before he finds a single one of these hermits. And picture the hunt—a man in the gloom, fathoms down: air and light and help as high above him—at times—as the top of Tom Tower from the quad: searching among ooze and rock and razor coral: breathing through a tube which any prowling shark may snap in two. He himself is safe from sharks unless blood is about, because the bubbles streaming from the helmet scare them away; but gropers, sting-ray, and giant clams are just as hungry and not so nervous. A diver earns his pay.

It is high enough to tempt him from Japan, bind himself by a contract, and work day and night at the bottom of the sea. If his luck is out he dies—gropers, or paralysis. If his luck is in he goes home rich. If he serves in a lugger at Thursday Island, in the Torres Strait (where I was a year later), he may have a bag of pearls to pack up with his money. The diver keeps what he finds in the Strait. Pearls are smaller up there and sell for less. At Broome a 'shell-opener', who is an

Australian, goes out with each lugger, and in theory extracts every pearl. In practice no one is sure. You hear tales of oysters which have been opened by a pan of hot water, closed by a dip in the sea. Who gets the pearls then? In any case it is the shell which is the stand-by; the mother-of-pearl, commerce calls it. It fetched four hundred pounds a ton once; one hundred and eighty pounds a ton when I was in Broome; and to-day, alas, one hundred and twenty. If a lugger brings home six tons in the season the owner calls himself a lucky man.

I did not want to leave the fleet. My lugger was neat and trim and well-found; and her crew, grinning happily, fell over one another in their zeal to show new things to the stranger. The water lapped her sides silkily. The sunlight splashed over her deck and gear, and spilled into the dinghy bobbing under the counter. She was inviting enough to tempt me away pearling; enticing enough for my chancing the stink of drying oyster gristle<sup>1</sup> and the size of the cockpit. But my ship had to catch the tide. If there ever comes a day when I need not catch my ship, I shall seek out my host in Broome and go off with him in his schooner, collecting shell from the fleet. But I have no stomach for fifteen-fathom diving. If I want a pearl I shall bargain for it like the experts.

Even in open-hearted Broome you cannot expect pearls to be given away, but you can buy them. Dealers from Paris make the round once a year—Broome, Thursday Island, Singapore, and home again. They want pearls, good ones, and they know what to

<sup>1</sup> The crew is given the inside of the oysters, which are dried for curry. No one grudges them this delicacy. A stomach which could face its musky rankness would never be found ashore.

pay for them. In spite of artificial pearls, and cultural pearls, and synthetic pearls, the oyster pearl still gets its price. I saw four, taken out of a safe, with care, and poured from an envelope into my hand. I held the worth of a lugger, or a semi-detached villa, or a Daimler saloon—say sixteen hundred pounds. Three white filiny spheres and one golden one. Strange progeny of irritation!

I left them in the safe; for should I have made myself any happier by taking the lot? I doubt it. And my Letter of Credit was not intended for such heroics. The shells I brought from Broome have given me more pleasure than those pearls ever would. They are four disks as big as cheese plates, gleaming and iridescent and lovely, scattered about with 'blisters'. They came from a shed where a wizened old Malay worked, in the dark, piling the luggers' cargoes shoulder-high like crockery in a warehouse.

I had nothing to give in return for them but my good wishes and the material for a toast, which we drank at the 'Governor Broome'—

'Here's to the price of shell.'

## II

The Second came down to breakfast with a note for me from the Captain. It said 'Dampier beached his ship, the *Roebuck*, and careened her at Cygnet Bay, which lies fifteen miles on our starboard beam. 1688. Would you like to come on the bridge?'

An honour like that would make any one bolt the last mouthful of orange and go on deck at the double. We were going through the Buccaneer Archipelago, at the north-east entrance to King Sound. On our port hand was a chain of islands, sandy knolls covered

in scrub, or lumps of rock, like yellow metal, fringed with beach and a line of foam. They stood out clear in this crystalline light, desolate, and sun-dried; as unfriendly as they were when the Portuguese first saw them, or the Dutch came this way. The strip of sand where Dampier beached the *Roebuck* is just as he left it. No one goes there: there seems no reason why any one should. The Captain told me that he had seen natives crossing to the islands once or twice; a man with a gin or two and a couple of dogs, huddled together on a raft of boughs and grass-rope. Survey vessels have landed a boat's-crew here and there to look for water; the *Pilot* gives particulars, adding ominously, 'None was found.' Masters of ships keep well away, running no risks. So the Archipelago as a whole is left to the shark and the dugong,<sup>1</sup> which tell no tales. I wish they would. I want to know more about Mermaid Island, a slab of rock, steep-to, ringed round with coral reefs. Does the mermaid really live here, in the heat of 16° 21' S., without a palm, a bush, or any green thing for shade, and only the surf to watch her combing her hair?

### III

We were approaching Derby, and the hatches came off in readiness for the cattle. How these would be got on board I could only guess: slings, perhaps, and lighters? Memories came to me of elephants hanging in mid-air, their trunks limp. But hundreds of bullocks, straight from the wilds! They would take a week to embark, and fifty men to handle them.

I was wrong at all points. The cattleman proved me

<sup>1</sup> The sea-cow, a large herbivorous mammal which frequents these seas.

to be so in five minutes. We called him Tiny, for he was a direct descendant of Little John. All his life had been spent among bullocks, except when he went to chase the Turks off Gallipoli.

He rarely showed his powers. All day long he would lean over the rail, his arms folded across his massive chest: staring out to sea, in silence, and breathing heavily through his nose. But my luck was in.

He took me below to the cattle deck, through a door marked 'No Admittance'.

'We'll start here, doc.,' he said, 'and I'll tell you all about it. Bullicks come aboard along a race. Who's been handing you out stuff about slings? Slings be blanked. How could you use 'em? Bullicks come aboard along a *race*. This is a race,' and he pointed to narrow gangways, railed in on both sides, which sloped from the main deck down to the cattle deck, branched right and left, and went on to the deck below. Think of a switchback, with angles instead of curves and gates at every angle, and you have it.

'On the jetty there's another race running right up to the edge. It goes away to the pens where they muster the mob, a mile back. When the ship berths we run a race across the deck and up to the one on the jetty, joining the ends, like, and she's set. Then we wait till sundown. Bullicks is irritable in daylight and will stampede, likely. But after dark they come along one after the other, following like sheep. If one of them jibs I touch him up with the tickler.'

'What's that?'

'Electric battery. Does no harm, but it makes 'em think, quick and lively. You've got to keep 'em going,



for if you get a bad jam in the race that's the stone end of it. They come right across the deck, right down here, and then the Malays draft 'em at the corners with these gates, see? right and left, and fore and aft, into them pens along the side. When this deck's full we send 'em down the race to the deck below, drafting all the time, till all the pens is full. Then we use the race as gangways for watering them and giving 'em their tucker.'

'Don't they slip going down the race?' I asked. 'It's steep.'

'No. There's straw down, y'know, and slats across, every yard. They're sure-footed, bullocks.'

'And you can get the whole lot on board just by using a race and gates at every corner?'

'Too right we can. You'll see. We'll go off like a floating farmyard, all straw and stink.'

'Well, you've got a hot job in front of you, Tiny,' I said.

'Hot? My oath! If you've a cobber<sup>1</sup> who's got a brewery, you tell 'im to lock it up and hide the key the night them bullocks is coming down, like Sykes used to do with the water-carts on Gallip'li.'

'Who was Sykes?' I asked, scenting a tale; 'some one you knew?'

'Na-o: *Sykes*. Them Indians with beards.'

#### IV

We went up King Sound and lost the land. The sky was brass. The jade-green sea which smiled on us at Broome had gone, and in its place was something so strange that it drew the drowsiest from his deck-chair to look over the side and wonder, brought up

<sup>1</sup> Australian slang = companion, mate.

the Purser from below, and even fetched a grunt out of Ming the bar-tender, hitherto proof against any excitement and all emotion. Was it the sea at all?

It might have been the desert under a mirage, shimmering and pulsing and moving with the heat. It had the colour of coffee in that sinister light, coffee laced with cream. On the surface were long golden lanes which heaved lazily, rounding themselves imperceptibly into circles and eddies. The sun touched them with pearl, edged them with olive green. They spread and merged and re-formed and melted, opalescent, oily. Oil? It *was* oil. A bucketful settled all doubt. How did it get there? A dead whale? No whale, however dead, could cover all that sea. A wreck? None had been reported. An earthquake? or a submarine upheaval? We argued till a line of mangroves grew out of the skyline and a jetty appeared, the tide swirling round the piles of it—Derby, our landfall; but we never found the right answer. And the Captain, as he lowered his imposing frame into his chair at dinner that night, told the table impressively, that never, in all the years he had known this coast, had he seen anything like *that* before.

v

There is a church in Derby, and a post office and a school; a couple of hotels, a police-station and some houses—all built of planks and corrugated iron. When a ship puts in a horse-tram comes to life; and seated on its hard wooden benches you can see a foreshore dried like crocodile skin, some gnarled old baobab trees, and sand—tan, grey, and coppery bronze—whose glare makes you screw up your eyes. No fruit

grows in Derby; no vegetables. Seats in the school are petrol cases with the ends knocked out. The constable's beat is as big as Yorkshire. Iron is hot to the touch even when the sun is off it, and the white ant eats wood to powder. After dark every light is a misty haze dimmed by swirling insects; sandflies bite like needles; mosquito nets are a burden; sleep is coma. Such is Derby, W.A., and one hundred and ninety people live there.

We saw most of them.

The traveller's impressions of a place are necessarily different from those of its inhabitants. Beauties stir him, or austerities depress him because he sees them once and is gone; the keen edge both of admiration and of rebellion is generally blunted in those who have to see them every day. The Derby that I saw and have described, an outpost in an empty land, cannot be the same Derby to the men I met over its curry and strong tea. Outpost? they say—what about the places over the Fitzroy, or up in the Territory? This is a centre, a gathering-place; warmish, perhaps, in a dry spell, and you can't get new books and you get tired of beef (what's a salad taste like nowadays?), but Derby is *home*. Very well. I shall not try to reconcile two opposites at this conference, but instead, I will say from the chair that hearts in Derby are as warm as the sunshine, and the talk outvalues many a novel.

## VI

On my last evening in Derby I sat outside the hotel with half a dozen other men, chance-comers, who had drifted there for a yarn and a smoke when the glare had left the sand. We watched the sun sink into the bay.

He hung an instant, a red ball on the edge of the sea, before his sharp bright rim dipped, setting the clouds alight, turning them to mountains swept from base to crest with fire which smouldered, glowed, and burned, filling the sky with flame. The light faded, sank down, died. A little breeze rose, rustling the baobab leaves. Some one hung a lamp over the door behind us, which threw a yellow shaft into the dusk; and as though they had been waiting for the signal, voices sounded in the bar, followed by a laugh and the click of billiard balls. Our talk began again casually, starting where it had left off.

Long after midnight an escorting party from the concert room charged over the sand in cars shamelessly overcrowded. Speeding the parting guest took on a new and literal meaning. Ming, the bar-tender, who never sleeps, emerged from his lair. Penultimate farewells began.

The last batch of cattle were going down the race. Lights on the jetty caught the tips of their horns, and as they passed under the sprayer, which drenched them against the torture of black-fly, they stampeded and the timbers shook. Poor beasts! They were handled by men used to the job; but how could they escape terror, when they were taken from the open and the light and driven into a cavern full of lamps and shouting and the wrong kind of smells? We, aiding and abetting, might, perhaps should, have decried this; advocated vegetarianism; vowed to eat no meat. I cannot remember that we did. What we said in good-byes has gone from me, except one question; as strange at that time and place as any tale of horror or fantasy the traveller returns with.

A Scotsman is speaking, the landlord of the hotel.

'Well, so long, doctor, and the best of luck. I hope we meet again. And one last thing. Can you recommend to me any books which give the trend of modern philosophic thought?'

## AUGUSTINE COURTAULD

### *Alone in the Arctic*

*Reprinted, by permission, from THE TIMES*

BASE CAMP, May 12, 1931.

I WAS one of a party of six under F. S. Chapman which left the Base on October 26 to relieve the centre station. We expected to reach the station in three weeks, but owing to a sudden change of the weather to winter conditions it was thirty-nine days before we reached our destination.

Three of the party had returned to the base from a point 30 miles in, so that only three of us arrived to relieve Bingham and D'Aeth. These were Chapman, Wager, and myself. It was originally intended that Wager and I should occupy the station, but I saw that this would be extremely risky; we should only have food till the end of February, and if existing weather conditions continued, as in fact they did, a relief by then would be very difficult, if not impossible. There were, therefore, two alternatives, (a) to abandon the station, and (b) for one of us to stay there alone, in which case there would be food and fuel on reduced rations till the end of April. We were reluctant to take the first alternative, as the station had been established with so much trouble and kept going with so much care; also my feet and hands had been rather badly frostbitten during the last few days of our journey, as our sleeping bags had become frozen up.

For these reasons I decided to stay alone. Watkins and I had, in London, talked over the possibility of

leaving only one man at the station at any time in case of need, and had considered it perfectly safe to do so.

After a premature Christmas dinner on December 5 the others started away on the following day. The weather was clear, with the sun just above the horizon, shining pink across the flat featureless snow. About ten o'clock the three sledges were ready, and with a 'damma, damma, damma,' they drew away down the trail and were soon a speck in the distance.

My home for the next five months consisted of a circular dome-shaped tent, ten feet in diameter, with double walls. It was covered with a snow house and through the top protruded a metal ventilator about two inches across. To get in, one dived down a tunnel, and, after going along a twelve-foot passage, came up into the tent through a square hole in the floor. From this passage two side passages had been cut out leading into two smaller snow houses, one on each side, which were used as store-houses. The whole was enclosed by an eight-foot wall of snow in which was fixed a short pole from which flew the Union Jack. This wall formed a courtyard useful for storing supplies. Close by, outside the 'ramparts,' as we called this wall, were the meteorological instruments, which were read every three hours.

When I began my tour of duty I found the station supplied with every necessity, and excepting the pain of my frostbites I was really very comfortable. I had plenty to eat and drink, an excellent supply of classical and other literature, good tobacco, and a fine lamp to read by. My house was warm, and I lived an untroubled life of ease, if not of luxury. Although the

sun had set, theoretically not to rise for a month, it appeared by refraction on midwinter's day. The weather continued fine for the next ten days. This was very good for the returning party, which had started back short of food, and it gave me reason to hope that I was in for settled cold weather.

These conditions did not hold. The weather soon broke to its former state of incessant strong winds from the north-west with accompanying driving snow and no visibility. This began to fill the courtyard, against which my digging efforts were futile, as I could not dig for more than ten minutes at a time owing to my frostbitten toes, insufficiently protected by split moc-casins. It got more and more difficult to climb out of the tunnel, and finally, on January 4, an exceptionally severe gale filled the entrance beyond hope of excavation. I expected the air in the tent to become foul, since its entrance was cut off, but I found that this did not happen, which was a great relief. I succeeded in getting out by cutting a hole in the roof of one of the snow houses. This I closed against the drift with a ration box, packing in snow around the cracks. This entrance proved much more satisfactory, though more difficult to use.

I faintly hoped that one of our aeroplanes would pay me a visit in the early part of the year and drop me some luxury supplies, books, and a note about the state of affairs at the Base. It turned out that several attempts were made, but owing to the changes of wind over the ice-cap it proved impossible to navigate the machine accurately enough to find the station, which indeed had little but the remains of the Union Jack to distinguish it from its surroundings. January passed without any very low temperatures, in fact, it



once rose as high as 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Gales occurred every few days.

These conditions prevailed until towards the end of February, when the weather became finer and colder. Fifty degrees below zero was frequently observed, although the sun was getting well up in the middle of the day. The lowest temperature recorded was 64 degrees below zero, which was not nearly as low as we had expected.

Many people might imagine that I was bored while living there with no company or scenery and little occupation, but this was far from being the case. One cannot be bored living an entirely novel life under such interesting conditions. My physical and mental condition, the weather, speculation about the work of the expedition, and the doings of friends at home were subjects that fully occupied my mind. I never had the slightest doubt with regard to my relief, though I fully realised that it might be delayed. I expected a party up about the end of March, and when that month ran out, although I had no fears for my own safety, I began to have them for the relief party, who, I thought, might have carried on too long and run out of food.

On March 18 a very severe gale caused the snow house, into which my bolt-hole led, to become filled up. I then began to cut my way through the roof of the second snow house. This proved difficult, as there was about five feet of snow on the top of it. However, I got out eventually, but the shaft was too long to permit my sealing it up properly, so that it was necessary to dig away the snow on top to bring the box which closed it within reach from inside. As I expected, another gale got up, and piled such a weight

of snow over the top that I could not move it. This cut off my last exit, and from March 21 I was completely snowed up. There was no danger in this, but it was disappointing to have to give up the meteorological observations, and not to be able to make signals in case the relieving party came near and could not see the station. Fortunately, I had previously brought nearly all my rations inside, though it was with considerable difficulty that I had dug them out of the snow in which they were buried six feet deep.

A more unpleasant occurrence was the shortage of fuel and candles. Four gallons of paraffin had leaked away, so that I had to give up hot meals and keep my fuel for melting drinking water. As time went on my enforced inactivity automatically reduced my daily needs. Never once during my stay did I eat less than I wanted, although towards the end of the time this was only half a pound a day. It is much to the credit of Watkins, who designed the rations, that such a little should suffice to keep one fit. Shortage of light was much more tiresome than lack of pleasant food. When the last candle was finished I had to lie in the dark all the time, though a faint ray of light down the one ventilator reminded me of the glorious sunshine outside. However, the light had outlasted my literature and tobacco, and I was thankful for that anyhow. Eventually, when I had no light, even to see to eat with, I tried burning ski wax. This certainly did give a sort of feeble illumination, but required constant attention, and was very sooty. All this time I was constantly burrowing and excavating in the snow house with the idea that it might be necessary to walk out in midsummer. To do this I should have had to take

some weeks of exercise first, and would then have started carrying nothing but about ten pounds of food and a compass, sleeping in the middle of the day. I never seriously expected to have to do this, but had to be prepared for any eventuality.

I had one serious dread. It was that some hysterical person would send an aeroplane which would land and be unable to take off again, so that I should have to feed and house its crew. I had two disturbing frights. On February 19, at 20 hrs. 35 mins. G.M.T., and on April 14 at 13 hrs. G.M.T. there was a distant rushing sound like a fast train followed by an appalling crash. The second occurrence was also observed on that day by Scott's relief party, which was then on the ice-cap, though fifty miles away. The only explanation I can offer is that these were earthquakes, which are frequent here on the east coast. The first time that this happened I thought that the whole place was going to fall in, but was relieved to find on such investigation as was possible that it had made no apparent difference to the snow surface above.

My great luxury, now that my pipe was extinguished, was the small allowance of chocolate in each ration box. I had a great disappointment when I opened one of the boxes and found the chocolate missing. This has unfortunately occurred with many of our ration boxes, and it would appear that before arriving here a number of them had been unscrewed, the chocolate removed, and the boxes screwed up again.

The tedious part of having no light was not being able to sleep for more than a few minutes at a time, and again in not knowing what one was putting into one's mouth. On several occasions I found myself consuming matter of a not strictly edible nature. I

had to be fairly ingenious in thinking out things to eat which would be palatable while using the minimum amount of water, and therefore heat. I found a mixture of cocoa, oats, and snow excellent. Pemmican chewed with margarine was satisfying. I had foolishly left my last tin of sugar outside, so lacked sweet things. However, it is well known that if one has sufficient fat and protein, carbohydrates can be dispensed with. As an anti-scorbutic I had specially prepared lemon juice. My rations would have lasted at this rate well into July.

At last, on May 5, I was day-dreaming in my sleeping-bag after my morning meal, when I was startled by a scuffling, followed by faint yelling sounds like a distant football match. Was this some new horrible manifestation on the ice-cap, or was it—could it be—the chaps? Then distinctly I heard: 'Hooray! How are you? Here we are to dig you out.' It was for me a very wonderful moment, but the greatest relief was to hear that everyone was all right and nobody had come to grief in trying to get to me. In a few minutes they had dug through the snow and cut the tent. There was the blue sky and sunshine and three good fellows to help me out and to talk to. I found my legs a bit stiff, of course, but otherwise was perfectly fit and able to walk the two miles to their camp.

The subsequent journey back to the Base and the unfortunate rescue attempts have been described by Watkins. It was for me a delicious contrast to the journey up. Instead of pushing, lifting, and heaving one's sledge along, I lay on it in the sunshine reading, smoking, or sleeping; and instead of camping in a blizzard we were able to pitch our tents in the calm of

a May evening. The second grand moment was at 4 a.m., when, after travelling for twenty-eight hours, we galloped down the glacier and across the sea ice to our house here and, waking up the crowd, we had a great reunion. Life is very, very good.

## F. YEATS-BROWN

### *Pigsticking*

*From BENGAL LANCER.*

HALF a dozen of us are lying inert on camp-beds behind mosquito curtains, in the big banyan grove, near Ratmugri Bagh. We are listening to the prelude to another day's pigsticking—beaters chattering to each other as gun-wads are distributed to them as tokens exchangeable for their daily wage of two-pence, servants quarrelling for amusement, the cook pelting a prowling village dog, the dignified burbling of the camel which is being saddled for its journey to the railway station to bring ice and letters.

There is the Shikari,<sup>1</sup> tall, grey bearded, with Graecian profile coming to tell the Tent Club Secretary of the prospects of sport. You can see by his bearing that he carries in him the *genes* of a conquering race (the Robilla Pathans) but he is as much a native of these plains as any of the Hindu beaters whom he curses so heartily and picturesquely in the idiom of the country. With him are two elders of the Tent Club staff known as Paderewski and Kubelik.

They are remarkable old men, these wild-haired headmen of the Nuts. Respectable villages will have nothing to do with the Nuts, for they are a Criminal Tribe, whose men are professional thieves and whose women are by no means honest, yet for all that they are a decent people. They might engage in much more profitable business than the beating-out of pig

<sup>1</sup> *Shikari*: hunt.

for us to ride, but sport is more to them than money, and they are content to toil all day for a pittance with the Tent Club, often in peril of their lives. Civic virtues they lack, but fortunately there is more than one standard of worth in this world.

Our horses are saddled, and the two elephants are ready—Moti Lal with his howdah<sup>1</sup> and crate of lager beer packed in wet straw, and Lashkman Piari with her pad, on which nothing but a medicine chest is carried. If there should be a casualty, it will be her office to convey the sufferer to hospital.

Last night I gave her a rupee for herself. She went to the neighbouring village, dropped the money into the *baniah's*<sup>2</sup> lap and helped herself to as much sugarcane as she could carry in her trunk. Now she opens her mouth and raises her trunk sky-high in an impressive *salaam*. She is a snob, like most elephants, and thinks I'm rich.

Moti Lal is not so sure of me. Moti Lal belongs to a Rajah (whereas Piari's master is only a *zamindar*<sup>3</sup>) and attends all the *tamashas*<sup>4</sup> of the district—marriages, festivals, tiger-shoots. He has seen two generations of men come and go, and has salaamed to two Viceroys and knelt to a King. He is old and conservative, and dislikes the look of Brownstone. None of the great men he has met had a dog like this.

There is a cool wind from the hills, and a scent of flowering bamboos from a near-by *bagh*.<sup>5</sup> What if the butter is rancid and the eggs stink? Sun and air are food on these marvellous plains.

The Shikari has mounted his flea-bitten mare. The

<sup>1</sup> *howdah*: seat strapped on elephant's back.

<sup>2</sup> *baniah*: shopkeeper.

<sup>3</sup> *zamindar*: landowner.

<sup>4</sup> *tamasha*: show.

<sup>5</sup> *bagh*: plantation.

Nuts, with their mongrel dogs, move off in a separate group to the other beaters, for they consider themselves a caste superior to the villagers while pigsticking is in progress.

After drawing lots for our positions, we separate into 'heats' and ride off to our appointed places. We are to beat Ratmugri Bagh first, a glade of linked bamboo thickets, full of shade and water and good rootling-grounds. In its pools several *bahut bhari baba* have been seen wallowing at their ease—'very heavy grandfather pig'—and we are reasonably certain of good sport.

My first horse to-day is The Devil, a bright bay country-bred, out of an Arab mare by a thoroughbred English stallion. He is the best charger I have ever owned.

While the beaters are tapping their slow way through the thicket, he lifts his beautiful head; nostrils wide, ears cocked; hearing, smelling, seeing, every nerve tense as he dances round and round my bridle hand. Two peacocks prance out of a ride, screech, flap back to the village. Dust-whirls dance in the yellow plain, shimmering away to the pale goddesses of the Himalayas. Leaves and branches stir to a light wind. It is good to be alive on such a day, with pipe in mouth and a good horse ready. A sow looks out of her shelter, goes back, gathers her family together—six blue-black babies with a gold band round their bellies—and leads them all out past us not twenty yards away. They stop when The Devil snorts. He wonders why I don't mount and ride?

The squeakers stand stuffily, wondering who we are and what we want. When they are older, they'll know. The Devil quits prancing and pawing, for he has guessed, I think, that they are too small. He sniffs the



air, snatches nervously at some grass, jerks up his head again to listen to the yelping of the Nuts' dogs. I can recognise the voices of Jim (the terrier) and Majira (the semi-dachshund bitch) and Bachu (the half-Airedale). Yes, Bachu has stirred a boar out of his sleep. Bang! That's the Shikari's blunderbuss, to speed the parting guest. One, two, three, come the sounders out of the *bagh*, with a dozen pig in each.

God, how glorious! The plain is black with pig, and amongst them are at least half a dozen rideable boar. My heat has swung into saddle without a word. We don't ride yet, however, for we must give the quarry time to break clear of cover.

The Devil's heart is drumming between my legs.

Lashkman Piari comes crashing out of the *bagh* at a trot. Her mahout takes off his yellow turban and waves it and yells to us as if we hadn't seen the six big boar and their thirty brothers and sisters streaming across the *maidan*<sup>1</sup> under our noses.

Now another two sounders have broken towards the group at the far side of the *bagh*, a mile away, and are making along the canal. I can see the riders mount and cram down their hats and raise their spears. Through the heat-waves the sun looks distant and fantastic—*maya*, maybe?—that Becoming which is not illusion. The notion flickers in my mind and is extinguished, for the time has come to ride.

We're off, each after a boar of his own. Mine is a big red one. I cram heels to The Devil and we eat up the ground between us and our prey.

But as soon as he sees that he is being pursued, down goes his head and up his heels, with a spurt of dust behind them. He is making for Khaitola, a *bagh*

<sup>1</sup> *maidan*: level plain.

some two miles away. If he keeps to that line I shall certainly kill him, for it is open going and The Devil can overtake even a lean young boar within a mile. This one is fat, and obviously short in wind and temper.

He begins to tire, and sits down so suddenly that I can't stop. As I pass, reining hard, I see his little bloodshot eyes with the hate of the world in them, and his lips' wicked lines, snarling back from a pair of remarkably fine tushes. He is up again by the time I have turned The Devil, and is making for some road menders' pits near the river. It is foul going here; he stumbles and rips at the earth that tripped him.

Then he sees a tethered goat, and slashes it in his rage. Just with a flick of his neck as he gallops by!

The goat is done for. I must stop. Poor goat—what a fate—what a mess! A thrust to the heart, and it is out of its pain.

That has lost me several lengths, but now the boar is loitering again. He is one of the red, truculent sort for which Bareilly is famous, who would sooner fight than run. As we draw up, he stops, about turns, charges. It all happens so invisibly-quick that I can hardly put my spear down. We meet at eighty miles an hour and my spear-point strikes the top of his skull, grazing down his shoulder. There is a jar, a scuffle. I turn The Devil with an oath and an unkind hand on the bit.

The boar has trotted to a bush where only the ridge of his back is visible. I have at him again, but The Devil's thoroughbred skin is so delicate that he refuses to face the thorns. Five, ten minutes I wait, cursing myself for a clumsy fool.

The Shikari canters up on his old grey mare. Behind him comes Lashkman Piari and some of the Nuts. The Shikari is very angry. Why did I stop to kill the goat?

This is the best boar in Ratmugri Bagh. Unless I have wounded him badly he will recover his wind and make a dash for the river and get away. Shall I go in on foot, I ask him? 'Don't be a fool, Sahib,' growls the old man, waving to the elephant.

Lashkman Piari ambles up with a distinct smile behind her trunk. Why she enjoys this business no man knows. She is as nervous as a kitten on a bridge, dithers at slippery going, and becomes idiotic with fright at a quicksand, yet when bidden to stamp on a wounded boar—the most dangerous brute in creation—she is transformed into an Amazon and a heroine.

The Devil is snatching at his bridle, and nibbling grass again, trembling, in a lather of foam. Piari, with her trunk lifted out of harm's way, heaves her big feet about among the thorns. *Woof!* The boar is away, making for the river, as the Shikari said. I am on his tail, though. He can't escape me now, for I am between him and his goal.

Almost I'm sorry, because the advantages are all on my side. Yet the boar is too noble for pity. I see him calculating the moment that he will charge: 'Give me liberty or give me death!' My spear is well down this time. He throws himself on it. A fountain of blood jets up. He is dead, only about a hundred yards from his sanctuary.

In the open, the odds are against the boar, but in blind cover he has more than an equal chance against a man. That is one of the purifying risks of pigsticking.

The other two of my heat have wounded a thirty-six inch boar who lies in a patch of thick thorn. We must go in on foot. The elephants cannot push their way into the tangle and it would not be fair to ask the

beaters to risk themselves. Three of us, therefore, creep to his lair.

The dogs have been leashed. It is dark where we are. In front of me something grunts, crashes, splinters wood. The man on my right gasps; he has been charged and knocked down. A small wound in his breeches drips blood; his spear is broken.

We work round again to the boar. There he is grunting and crashing and charging—but whom? A disorderly pulse hammers in my throat.

I smell pig overpoweringly. A great head, each bristle on it distinct, confronts me out of the thorns. Something hits me in the ribs; it is the butt of my spear, which the boar has driven into me as he passed. I've wounded him, but far back. I run to the edge of the bushes and see him struggling out.

He makes for Paderewski, who attempts to avoid the charge by jumping up his pole. The boar trips (for he is spent and dying) and falls on his knees. Before he rolls over jerks at Paderewski.

Lashkman Piari hurries up with the medicine chest. Paderewski is holding his leg tightly, for his thigh is cut to the bone. The Tent Club Secretary gives him half a tumbler of brandy, then a little ether. I dissolve a pellet of disinfectant in soda water. He is white to the lips under his brown skin, but this kind of thing is all in the day's work; he has suffered a score of woundings in our service.

The veins knot at his temples, but he does not wince when I feel his leg for a fracture. Nothing is broken this time, and the stitches can wait for the hospital. What's that stuff to stop bleeding? Hemisine. A wad of that, and now we hoist him on to the pad elephant. He brushes back the long hair tumbling

over his eyes with one hand, and stretches out the other for more brandy, grinning, undismayed at his twenty-first mishap. He will get no less than sixpence a day of blood money while he is being mended.

The Sahib comes next. His wound is larger than we thought, but only half an inch deep, looking like a streak of lightning on the inner side of his thigh. We put him beside Paderewski on the elephant and send them both back to camp.

Now Moti Lal yields up his stores of lager beer and damp cheroots. The beaters squat round in a circle, nibbling grain and parched barley. Three boar have been killed this morning, and they are well content, although none of them has more in his belly than there is in a London pigeon's. Twopence a day is not much, even in India, but they have seen good sport from the shade of Ratmugri. Now a harder-earned pennyworth of work is in store for them, for we are to draw the grass country by the Ganges, and they will have to walk miles and miles, knowing that every step they take they may tread on a pig, panther, or even the King of the Jungle himself. No doubt they will have much to tell their wives this evening.

The Devil goes back to camp, where barley water and hot bandages await him. He whinnies and looks back as he is led away, as if to say that one run is nothing for a big horse with a light-weight in the saddle. That's true, but he is too precious to risk so early in the season.

Ur of the Chaldees is also a country-bred, slower of foot, but quicker of brain. Indeed he is as clever as a man, and thinks more than is good for a horse—qualities inherited from the Arab sire. In blind country I can always trust him to pick his way; and

on the tail of a pig he knows exactly where to place himself. When we fall, which is often, he stands patiently beside me, waiting to be mounted again. A bit is unnecessary in his mouth; nothing but a white rope-halter has adorned his intelligent face for more than a year now. If he were only a little faster, he might win me the Kadir Cup.

• On a small scale, this *jhow*<sup>1</sup> pigsticking is like the hunting circle of the Mongols, who drove every living thing before them, gradually drawing in their line for a great slaughter, followed by a great feast. Our quarry is the boar, but everything else in the jungle flies in front of our horses; hog-deer who scuttle between beaters' legs, and hares, and cyrus-cranes, whose staid flirtations it seems boorish to interrupt, and wild cattle, *nilgai*,<sup>2</sup> peacocks, panther. . . .

A group of beaters, sauntering by a grass-fringed stream, have stopped and run together like frightened sheep. The Shikari gallops up; but his mare plants her forelegs and refuses to move, for she smells what is lurking there.

With a snarling that freezes my blood, a panther flashes by me in a streak of gold. We pursue him, but the *jhow* is so tall that it hides even our horses, and he is soon lost to view, which is just as well, perhaps, for there are only two men alive who can face a panther with their hog-spear, and be sure of killing him. Now the beaters go forward again lightheartedly. A kingfisher dives smartly into the Ganges. The shadow of a hawk passes over the wet sand.

I am feeling thirsty, and ride down a rutty road to a village, past a mango-grove where monkeys gibber. A yellow and white dog squirms and barks when I

<sup>1</sup> *jhow*: a kind of tamarisk.    <sup>2</sup> *nilgai*: large grey antelope.

reach the little mud houses of Shikarpur; a water buffalo lowers its long horns; women at the well veil themselves. I am an unwelcome intruder. One of the girls is young and beautiful; I ask her for water, but she shivers, and presses both hands to her face and turns to the wall. Is that coquetry, or convention? I am as innocent as I am thirsty.

I explain my need to a merchant, who comes out of his shop salaaming, white as the flour he sells. He searches for an earthenware vessel, and gives me to drink. But I do not tarry, for I know that I am not wanted here.

I am hated in this kind village. The doves flutter scatheless round the village shrine; peacock tread the earth delicately and proudly, knowing that they are held precious; even the monkeys that loot the *baniahs'* shops are sacred; but this white monkey that has ridden into the village on a stamping horse, grasping a hog-spear, has brought pollution with the very air he breathes. The cup from which he has drunk will be broken.

I am back with the line in time to see a pig break to another heat. Six hours we have been in saddle—and the last three without a hunt. Yet I could go on like this for ever with the magic of the Ganges plains before me. Here land and air are wide and worthy of giants. The crops, the soft-eyed oxen, the far horizon, the white masses of its north-eastern limit, the dim blue *baghs* to southward, the pig, and peacock, and panther, and scurrying deer; all sights and sounds under this turquoise vault, except mankind, are heart of my heart and carry in some mysterious fashion memories of another life. A life in which the freedom of the villages was also mine.

Riding with me is the Civil Magistrate of the district, a good sportsman and a good officer, loved by his people.

'Do you think,' I ask him, 'that it is possible to know India—I mean the life of the peasants?'

'It is possible, but unwise,' he says. 'The people don't ask for friendship, but fairness. They want someone from the outside to judge them. All that is necessary is to be accessible to them when they come with their complaints.'

'And that isn't as easy as it seems, I suppose? Do you think for instance, that these villagers of yours have to bribe their way to your presence?'

'I hope not,' he says: 'for I ride about the district a great deal. Of course I know there is a danger that my servants may take *baksheesh*.<sup>1</sup> But I have an old retainer whom I trust. He comes with me everywhere.'

'That old man?' I ask, nodding to a grey-beard who follows us with a *chowri*,<sup>2</sup> to keep off the flies.

'Yes, I trust him absolutely.'

The Collector has hardly spoken, before a peasant flings himself under our horses' feet.

'I have only four rupees,' sobs the suppliant. 'For years I have been trying to bring my case to you.'

'Four rupees?'

'Yes, Cherisher of the Poor. That man'—pointing to the patriarch with the fly-whisk—'wants five rupees to allow me to enter your Court.'

That evening, after we have finished drawing the *jhow*, an enormous swarm of pig—a line at least half a mile in length—comes streaming out of Khaitola Bagh. It charges through a herd of cattle, scattering

<sup>1</sup> *baksheesh*: bribe.

<sup>2</sup> *chowri*: fly-whisk.



them in all directions, and darkens the plain with bodies of all sizes and both sexes. Each of us has marked down a monster for his prey. Mine is a beauty. Ur cocks his ears, I do believe he's judging its weight.

He's a fast boar too. Ur can't gain on him at first. Khaitola Bagh is close. If he jinks now, I'm done. I wish I had The Devil!

At last we draw level. Then, a foot too far away to spear him safely, my quarry turns in a right-angled left-handed jink. I flatten myself in the saddle, and thrust at him, across Ur's forelegs. Crash! Flump! Where am I?

My mouth is full of dust and my nose of pig. I'm pinned to the ground, face down, and there's a most unpleasant pain in my legs. I can't move them. Twisting my neck, I see the sweat-lathered hide of Ur, looming above me. His rope halter is in my left hand, torn off his head. Well, if that is all that is broken . . . Ur is struggling to get up, damn him. The pig is on his other side, transfixd by my spear, which is also under Ur's body. A carrion hawk observes us three unwilling bed-fellows, expecting something.

I can only wait.

My thoughts go back to England, where I hope to be, come May year. I have lost a tooth. I wish I had a quart of lager beer. Ur shall have a bottle too, if we get out of this mess. Lawn tennis is a good game—it doesn't jar. The Adjutancy—promising young officer cut short in his career—paralysis? My brain is buzzing like a clockwork mouse. I wish Ur would either get up or lie down. I'd rather die quick than continue in this pain.

The pig is wriggling himself off the spear. I must think straight. Run straight, I mean, if I get the

chance. Now Ur's heaved himself up. He's nibbling grass, the idiot.

Can I run?

Can't I? There's a tree.

I don't know how I've come here.

Does this swollen blue thumb belong to me?

The pig is dead with my broken spear in him, and the earth is heaving under him. And under Ur too, who is grazing in a billowy plain, with his saddle twisted under his belly. Men and horses and elephants are approaching through an earthquake.

With a wet towel round my head, I am allowed to attend the evening ceremony of weighing and measuring our five mighty boar. Those of us who have obtained a 'first spear' examine the tushes of their victims, while our syces<sup>1</sup> press round us, watchfully, for it is their perquisite to take away the bristles along the spine, and various other parts. When all the particulars have been entered into the Tent Club log, the bodies are given to the Nuts, who will cut them up and gorge themselves on pork to-night.

Then there is the paying of coolies. A hundred men squat before us in a semicircle; each holding a gun-wad in his right hand. The Tent Club Secretary has a stick and a bag of money, the Shikari, a lantern, for it is growing dark. The Secretary counts the men, while the Shikari collects the gun-wads; every eighth man is tapped with a stick, which is a signal for him to rise and receive a rupee to divide with the seven beaters on his left.

Finally we attend to casualties, not only our own but any sick folk of the neighbourhood who care to

<sup>1</sup> syce: groom.

come. Our methods are quick, drastic, popular. No medicine which does not taste horrible is administered. Quinine we mix with asafoetida; itch we cure with neat sulphuric acid; purgatives we have a-plenty, and ginger; and Easton's syrup, but only for eminent and elderly preservers of pig. For miles round our fame has spread. One of our members is a distinguished surgeon; we allow him to deal with the difficult cases, but the Secretary and I are more popular as consulting physicians. Paderewski needs a great deal of brandy, poor old chap, and is given enough to put a guardsman to sleep. Then Lashkman Piari's mahout comes to report she is feverish, and as it has been a good day he is given half a bottle of whiskey, which he solemnly shares with her. Ur sups off a Bass and cooked barley.

For me there is no dinner to-night. I lie on my bed near the mess-table contentedly enough, listening to the tales of the veterans; how the great hog of Saidupur jumped upon the back of a horse; how the gods of the temple by the curving stream of Shahi were propitiated by *baksheesh* before we drew the covert; how Wardrop manages the Meerut Tent Club; how Faunthorpe kills panthers; how we speared ten boar on the sunlit plain of Kicha; and of the prowess of those great horses Sausage and Cowdapple, and Bohemian, and Fizzer—a saga of stories that will never be written.

By my bed lies the Abbé Dubois' *Hindu Manners and Customs* to remind me that I once met a pundit who told me of a nephew of his. The book, however, remains outside the mosquito curtain. Instead of reading, I sharpen my hogspear.

I file away with my swollen hand, and spit blood. When I lie flat, the bed rocks gently, as if I were floating.

## KINGSLEY FAIRBRIDGE •

### *A Boy's Adventures in Mashonaland*

From THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF KINGSLEY FAIRBRIDGE

Gone are those resolute trekkers—pilgrims who passed through the desert . . .

Suns no longer shall smite them, nor ever the moon enchant! . . . Stern was the conflict and long, but the desert has broken and crushed them . . .

Merged are they in its fabric—one with the infinite veld!

FRANCIS CAREY SLATER.

(*The Karoo.*)

SOON after this a number of farms and a township in the district of Rusapi required surveying. I went as my father's advance agent for the purpose of building survey beacons on all the kopjes for five miles or so around Carr's store on the Rusapi—or Lesapi—River. I walked the distance, sixty odd miles, following the survey line of the Mashonaland Railway. At the Odzi, Inyazura, and Inyamapamberi rivers the bridge builders had started work. At various points on the survey line were contractors' huts, where great gangs of Kafirs—ranging from the Mabandawi of the Lakes to the clean-built fighting men of Matshanga—were digging the cuttings and laying down the embankments of the permanent way.

'Chai-ire!'<sup>1</sup> called the overseers; and a hundred hungry voices would respond in chorus, 'Hara-hara!'<sup>2</sup>

I camped with strange men at night, and heard strange speech and tales. Some of the men had worked on the Beira railway—you knew them by their yellow faces—but most of them came from England or the

<sup>1</sup> *Chai-ire!*: Knock off work!      <sup>2</sup> *Hara-hara!*: Hurrah!

Argentine. This high-veld work was a different matter from the here-to-day-and-gone-to-morrow struggle on the Pungwe Flats, but even here men died. I remember Robinson, a florid, jovial man who told us all about his wife and three little children in a London suburb—whither he was returning when his contract was over. He had calculated that he would make good money; he showed me his assets and his liabilities, and where he saved while other men drank. Before I returned the Head Overseer had come that way by night, calling 'Chai-ire' as he passed. And Robinson had put by his figures and his tools, leaving an address for his last cable home.

The man who sent that cable was my friend Hutchinson, at that time working for my father; and he too has gone. And Dicky Marks, the mason; and his chum Angus. And Bloech of Transau and Ross of Rusapi. And the merry Irish lad at Inyazura, and the bridge-builder at the Odzi, and many another of whose hospitality I partook, whose names I have forgotten, but whose faces are still in my eyes. *Hara-hara!* my brothers, we may yet meet again.

A lad of thirteen, dressed in knickers and shirt sleeves, I walked on the outskirts of the Empire, where the shouting of men, the ring of hammers on stone, and the thud of picks in the baked earth were always in my ears. I saw the dust blow from the rising embankments, and the rocks rent asunder in the cuttings. Fig and thorn and kafir-orange vanished before the axes; villages of grass and canvas sprang to life amidst the virgin veld. Men sang along the flanks of mountains, within whose caves the forgotten Bushman had painted his gallery of beast and tree and battle. The little streams did not know themselves; perspiring

bodies gloried in their crystal clearness where, perchance, men had never washed before. The long brown grass yielded her crop of thatch. The stone faces of the sleepy kopjes were rent with dynamite, that the bridges of the British people might be established in security. The wild bees were pestered by a score of thieves. The baboons shouted at the intruders; the horned game fled westwards to the Sabi.

And so I went ahead on the tide of progress, wondering and observing, and thinking of the thousand homesteads that would some day dot these fields.

It was spring. Over the granite kopjes of the highveld came the lichens in lovely tints of ivory and red and yellow. The umsasas<sup>1</sup> clustered round the giant rocks were a delicate intricacy of every shade from crimson to opal brightness. Scorpions and centipedes deserted their winter quarters under stone and bark; and every evening the long-tailed night-jars flitted noiselessly before us as we returned to camp. Sandveld is merry veld, and we had a good time at Rusapi notwithstanding certain inconveniences.

The inconveniences were in the matter of food. My father had given me two or three pounds, and expected to join me at Rusapi in the course of about a week. I spent the money at Carr's store on ufu<sup>2</sup> for my boys and bully beef and canned fruit for myself. But my father was delayed, and did not arrive for a month or more. In the course of the first fortnight I ran out of provisions, and a curious diffidence prevented me from buying further supplies 'on tick', so I ate ufu—plain, unappetizing ufu made from ropoko.<sup>3</sup>

The bridge contractor and Carr himself several

<sup>1</sup> *umsasa* : a flowering shrub.

<sup>2</sup> *ufu* : maize-meal.

<sup>3</sup> *ropoko* : maize.

times invited me to dinner, but the pride of poverty had taken root in my heart, and only once did I leave my own camp fire. On that occasion I ate enormously of boiled fowl, notwithstanding my efforts to check my appetite, and went away resolutely determined not to go again. I had not taken a gun, so I had no way of potting the few orebi<sup>1</sup> that sped before us over the plains, or the sparse dikkop<sup>2</sup> that bobbed their heads at us. Rusapi is high, open country, wide grass plains dotted here and there with granite kopjes. My two boys and I armed ourselves with knobkerries, and sometimes, on our way home from the day's work, we would have an impromptu game drive. We would approach a likely looking glade from different sides, and I would put Vic in to rouse the orebi. Our intention was to brain the orebi as it rushed out. But orebi are not so easily caught. Never did we get within a hundred yards of one.


We were more successful with the native fish-traps. My boys used to visit these early in the morning, and I am ashamed to say I did not scorn to share the two or three miserable little sardines that were only too seldom the reward of their dishonesty. There were no guinea-fowl to snare, no pheasants, no cane-rats, not even an oily likkewaan.<sup>3</sup> For a long time field-mouse was the only flesh we tasted. At sundown we used to dig the little animals from their earths. 'Sixpence', the picannin,<sup>4</sup> would dig away with a pointed stick, while Vic, and the other boy—Simon—and I would

<sup>1</sup> *orebi (oribi)* : a small animal weighing about 30 lb. found on short grass lands in several parts of Africa.

<sup>2</sup> *dikkop* : the stone-plover.

<sup>3</sup> *likkewaan* : iguana, a tree lizard.

<sup>4</sup> *picannin* : negro child.

wait around and keep a sharp look-out lest our quarry should escape by another exit. Sometimes we bagged three or four in the evening. We cooked them very simply—putting them straight on the burning embers, and when the hair had frizzled off and they looked cooked, we disembowelled them. If we had first skinned them, there would have been nothing left. 

Sixpence was a pimply and bandy-legged youth with a great store of unedifying tales about life in his native Senna. Simon came from farther north, and was professedly a Christian; he belonged to the tribe of Mabandawi, of whom vast numbers have been Christianized by the Blantyre missionaries. He carried a small 'Reader' of a religious nature. From this book with some difficulty he could make out a few monosyllabic sentences. Even these became fewer in the unacademic atmosphere of Rusapi.

Simon was a flagrant braggart. One of his favourite utterances was that nothing could make him afraid. But he was obviously terrified of Vic, and when we pointed this out to him he admitted that, as a matter of fact, he did have an instinctive objection to dogs. He fell further in our estimation by taking to his heels while Sixpence and I were robbing a native hive. He explained this by saying that it was dishonest to steal honey, and moreover stolen honey was sure to give one a stomach ache—"for the owners of the hive have buried magic at the foot of the tree." On the same day we tried to scale a kopje known as the Lion's Head, in order to build a beacon on the summit. The kopje had been fortified against the Matabele or the Tshangaans by the Makalanga of old. We had to crawl on all fours through a narrow stone gateway. No sooner had we all emerged than we became aware of a vast



rock-python coiled amidst the fallen rocks of the upper side, and regarding us with a beady stare. We were all startled, for we must have passed within a few inches of the creature; but Simon was so thoroughly horrified that infection was transmitted to the picannin and myself, and we made no effort to kill the reptile. After this we discovered the skulls of several deceased baboons, which pointed to the prowess of the rock-python, and Simon became dubious about the advisability of proceeding up the kopje. He advised a swift descent by another route, saying that the place was bewitched. However, we reassured him, and came at length to the base of an immense boulder that crowned the summit. The boulder was rent in two parts, and was capped by a smaller. Up this rent I sent Simon, while Sixpence and I waited till the passage was clear.

It became clear sooner than we expected. As Simon put his face over the upper ledge, he uttered a piercing yell and, tumbling down the rent, fled helter-skelter and shouting down the kopje. His terror was so complete that his black face, as he dashed past me, appeared positively blanched—and this apparent whitening of the face is no exaggeration, for I have seen other Kafirs in a like state.

Sixpence and I, drawing clear of whatever demon guarded the summit of the boulder, sat down and roared with laughter; but I do not think either of us was feeling any too steady. I know that at length, when I faced the rent myself, I took my sheath knife naked between my teeth and made the ascent in a very leisurely manner. As I raised my head warily over the ledge I found myself looking into the cold eye and at the blunted nose and flicking tongue of a

python at least twice—so it seemed to me—the length, girth, and potency of the one by the rocky gate!

Without further ado I lowered myself from that position of danger, and Sixpence and I joined Simon on the plain below—when the latter carefully explained to us that the missionaries had warned him more than once of the iniquity of snakes.

About this time we proposed erecting a new beacon on a hill called Commonage Kop. It was fortified, like the Lion's Head, with several lines of stone walls. When we had surmounted these we came upon the real difficulty. Upon our left towered a mighty granite monolith, quite unscaleable; at our feet was a crevasse—a great rent in the granite, of profound depth and hideous aspect; before us, and separated from us by the crevasse, was another monolith crowned with a ring of boulders—the citadel of the fortification. The monolith upon our left, which was the highest point, was coped with an immense boulder, and could be reached only by surmounting Menhir<sup>1</sup> No. 2. From Menhir No. 2 clung perilously an ancient and decrepit pole, over which, no doubt, some one had once essayed to reach the sky-supporting crest of Menhir No. 1.

A yawning chasm lay before us, and this could be crossed only by the aid of long stout poles set against the slippery face of Menhir No. 2. But the thought of creeping across another wobbly pole afterwards, and at a still greater altitude, sent a cold shiver down my back. The nervousness of Simon was quite comforting to witness. We all three sat down (in order to get a surer purchase on terra firma) to discuss the situation, and fixed our eyes on the ancient pole that hung fifty

<sup>1</sup> *menhir*: tall upright monumental stone.

feet above us. It was an extraordinary coincidence, but seemed to us fraught with a horrid significance, that at that very moment the ancient pole slipped, lost its balance, and hurtled directly down the crevasse to fall with a sickening crash a hundred feet below. I flung myself a yard or two back. A grey smile of horror pulled wryly at the pimpled face of Sixpence. Simon merely groaned and rolled over on his face, grasping convulsively at the lichened granite. Even Vic was moved, and, deserting the alluring entrance of a badger hole, peered shiveringly over the rent.

As soon as I felt sufficiently recovered I ordered the two boys to go down to the plain and cut a long stout pole, but Simon hysterically declined to take any part in the surmounting of either of the massive menhirs, and declared that this place—the gloomy, yawning chasm—was very much like the ‘Hell-o’ of whose torments the Blantyre missionaries had frequently spoken.

Not altogether ungrateful to the missionaries, I determined to leave Commonage Kop to my father. A week or two later he turned up, accompanied by his assistant, Cadoux. We thus changed our frugal diet for plenteous boiled fowl, rice, sweet potatoes, and tinned stuff. I told my father of the difficulties of Commonage Kop, and we set off there at once, taking a good supply of rope and axes. Simon absented himself for the day. When we arrived at the foot of the great monoliths it struck me that I was feeling a good deal bolder than before; and for the first time I realized that confidence is catching.

9 We cut long poles, lashed them together, and laid them against Menhir No. 2. We took off our boots and climbed up, one by one. Then we hauled up two

more poles and laid them across the abyss. The far ends of them rested unsteadily on the edge of Menhir No. 1 at an upward angle. Upon the summit was the great boulder, upon the top of which my father proposed to set up his theodolite and take observations. All round the base of the boulder, between it and the monolith, was a narrow ledge overlooking the gulf. It was proposed to crawl round this ledge to the other side, from which it appeared that the big boulder might be climbed. My father was for going first, to reconnoitre the position, for he was a fearless man. But Cadoux would not let him, and insisted on a picannin being sent first with a rope, for the smaller the climber the better chance of life he would have on that narrow ledge. My father had a picannin, but he promptly prostrated himself on the rock, and refused to budge. So finally my poor pimply Sixpence was selected. We roped him well, and sent him off. It was hair-raising to see the poles wobble. Four boys tried to steady them, while the rest of us payed out Sixpence's life-line. He passed the poles in good style, and wormed his way agonizingly round the narrow ledge: but once in safety on the far side his spirit failed him, and we could hear him sobbing aloud, '*Yowe, mai-wango-maiwango-we!*' ('Alas, my mother, my mother!')

Then my father went across, and then Cadoux; and they set up the theodolite, and took their observations. But I remained on the top of Menhir No. 2; in the first place because I was not wanted on the boulder, and in the second place because I would not have made the journey if I had been. And when they made the return journey I found that Cadoux, too, was a brave man. He was a Londoner, and could not be expected to have much experience of places like

Commonage Kop; but, my father and he being the last to make the descent, he insisted that my father should precede him. So that he himself crossed the two poles with no one at the farther end to hold them steady.

When we were at length on solid earth again, I had a narrow escape from losing my life. I was standing at the foot of the second monolith from which the boys were coming down one by one. My back was towards the monolith, and my father and Cadoux were standing about fifteen yards away across a little crevasse and facing me. Suddenly I became aware of a dull, gritting noise, and glancing towards my father I saw him gesticulating wildly and struggling to speak.

'Look out!' shouted Cadoux; and I drew back into the hollow base of the monolith.

On the same instant a great boulder, that must have weighed five hundredweight, crashed from the monolith above and splintered into a thousand fragments upon the very spot where I had been standing.

One of the boys on the summit had set the great stone sliding down the monolith, not knowing that I was standing just below. My father reached over to a forked shrub and seized his rifle; and the boy who set that stone a-sliding came very near to following it. But even as my father opened the breech-block he changed his mind, and putting down the rifle again said quietly:

'That was a narrow squeak, old Turnip-top!'

# LEO TOLSTOY

## *The Bear-Hunt*

*From* TWENTY-THREE TALES

[The adventure here narrated is one that happened to Tolstoy himself in 1858. More than twenty years later he gave up hunting, on humanitarian grounds.]

WE were out on a bear-hunting expedition. My comrade had shot at a bear, but only gave him a flesh-wound. There were traces of blood on the snow, but the bear had got away.

We all collected in a group in the forest, to decide whether we ought to go after the bear at once, or wait two or three days till he should settle down again. We asked the peasant bear-drivers whether it would be possible to get round the bear that day.

'No. It's impossible,' said an old bear-driver. 'You must let the bear quiet down. In five days' time it will be possible to surround him; but if you followed him now, you would only frighten him away, and he would not settle down.'

But a young bear-driver began disputing with the old man, saying that it was quite possible to get round the bear now.

'On such snow as this,' said he, 'he won't go far, for he is a fat bear. He will settle down before evening; or, if not, I can overtake him on snow-shoes.'

The comrade I was with was against following up the bear, and advised waiting. But I said:

'We need not argue. You do as you like, but I will follow up the track with Damian. If we get round the

bear, all right. If not, we lose nothing. It is still early, and there is nothing else for us to do to-day.'

So it was arranged.

The others went back to the sledges, and returned to the village. Damian and I took some bread, and remained behind in the forest.

When they had all left us, Damian and I examined our guns, and after tucking the skirts of our warm coats into our belts, we started off, following the bear's tracks.

The weather was fine, frosty and calm; but it was hard work snow-shoeing. The snow was deep and soft: it had not caked together at all in the forest, and fresh snow had fallen the day before, so that our snow-shoes sank six inches deep in the snow, and sometimes more.

The bear's tracks were visible from a distance, and we could see how he had been going; sometimes sinking in up to his belly and ploughing up the snow as he went. At first, while under large trees, we kept in sight of his track; but when it turned into a thicket of small firs, Damian stopped.

'We must leave the trail now,' said he. 'He has probably settled somewhere here. You can see by the snow that he has been squatting down. Let us leave the track and go round; but we must go quietly. Don't shout or cough, or we shall frighten him away.'

Leaving the track, therefore, we turned off to the left. But when we had gone about five hundred yards, there were the bear's traces again right before us. We followed them, and they brought us out on to the road. There we stopped, examining the road to see which way the bear had gone. Here and there in the snow were prints of the bear's paw, claws and all,

and here and there the marks of a peasant's bark shoes. The bear had evidently gone towards the village.

As we followed the road, Damian said:

'It's no use watching the road now. We shall see where he has turned off, to right or left, by the marks in the soft snow at the side. He must have turned off somewhere; for he won't have gone on to the village.'

We went along the road for nearly a mile, and then saw, ahead of us, the bear's track turning off the road. We examined it. How strange! It was a bear's track right enough, only not going from the road into the forest, but from the forest on to the road! The toes were pointing towards the road.

'This must be another bear,' I said.

Damian looked at it, and considered a while.

'No,' said he. 'It's the same one. He's been playing tricks, and walked backwards when he left the road.'

We followed the track, and found it really was so! The bear had gone some ten steps backwards, and then, behind a fir tree, had turned round and gone straight ahead. Damian stopped and said:

'Now, we are sure to get round him. There is a marsh ahead of us, and he must have settled down there. Let us go round it.'

We began to make our way round, through a fir thicket. I was tired out by this time, and it had become still more difficult to get along. Now I glided on to juniper bushes and caught my snow-shoes in them, now a tiny fir tree appeared between my feet, or, from want of practice, my snow-shoes slipped off; and now I came upon a stump or a log hidden by the snow. I was getting very tired, and was drenched with perspiration; and I took off my fur cloak. And there was Damian all the time, gliding along as if in a



boat, his snow-shoes moving as if of their own accord, never catching against anything, nor slipping off. He even took my fur and slung it over his shoulder, and still kept urging me on.

We went on for two more miles, and came out on the other side of the marsh. I was lagging behind. My snow-shoes kept slipping off, and my feet stumbled. Suddenly Damian, who was ahead of me, stopped and waved his arm. When I came up to him, he bent down, pointing with his hand, and whispered:

‘Do you see the magpie chattering above that undergrowth? It scents the bear from afar. That is where he must be.’

We turned off and went on for more than another half-mile, and presently we came on to the old track again. We had, therefore, been right round the bear, who was now within the track we had left. We stopped, and I took off my cap and loosened all my clothes. I was as hot as in a steam bath, and as wet as a drowned rat. Damian too was flushed, and wiped his face with his sleeve.

‘Well, sir,’ he said, ‘we have done our job, and now we must have a rest.’

The evening glow already showed red through the forest. We took off our snow-shoes and sat down on them, and got some bread and salt out of our bags. First I ate some snow, and then some bread; and the bread tasted so good, that I thought I had never in my life had any like it before. We sat there resting until it began to grow dusk, and then I asked Damian if it was far to the village.

‘Yes,’ he said. ‘It must be about eight miles. We will go on there to-night, but now we must rest. Put on your fur coat, sir, or you’ll be catching cold.’ X

Damian flattened down the snow, and breaking off some fir branches made a bed of them. We lay down side by side, resting our heads on our arms. I do not remember how I fell asleep. Two hours later I woke up, hearing something crack.

I had slept so soundly that I did not know where I was. I looked around me. How wonderful! I was in some sort of a hall, all glittering and white with gleaming pillars, and when I looked up I saw, through delicate white tracery, a vault, raven black and studded with coloured lights. After a good look, I remembered that we were in the forest, and that what I took for a hall and pillars were trees covered with snow and hoar-frost, and the coloured lights were stars twinkling between the branches.

Hoar-frost had settled in the night; all the twigs were thick with it, Damian was covered with it, it was on my fur coat, and it dropped down from the trees. I woke Damian; and we put on our snow-shoes and started. It was very quiet in the forest. No sound was heard but that of our snow-shoes pushing through the soft snow; except when now and then a tree, cracked by the frost, made the forest resound. Only once we heard the sound of a living creature. Something rustled close to us, and then rushed away. I felt sure it was the bear, but when we went to the spot whence the sound had come, we found the footmarks of hares, and saw several young aspen trees with their bark gnawed. We had startled some hares while they were feeding.

We came out on the road, and followed it, dragging our snow-shoes behind us. It was easy walking now. Our snow-shoes clattered as they slid behind us from side to side of the hard-trodden road. The snow

creaked under our boots, and the cold hoar-frost settled on our faces like down. Seen through the branches, the stars seemed to be running to meet us, now twinkling, now vanishing, as if the whole sky were on the move.

I found my comrade sleeping, but woke him up, and related how we had got round the bear. After telling our peasant host to collect beaters for the morning, we had supper and lay down to sleep.

I was so tired that I could have slept on till midday, if my comrade had not roused me. I jumped up, and saw that he was already dressed, and busy doing something to his gun.

‘Where is Damian?’ said I.

‘In the forest, long ago. He has already been over the tracks you made, and been back here, and now he has gone to look after the beaters.’

I washed and dressed, and loaded my guns; and then we got into a sledge, and started.

The sharp frost still continued. It was quiet, and the sun could not be seen. There was a thick mist above us, and hoar-frost still covered everything.

After driving about two miles along the road, as we came near the forest, we saw a cloud of smoke rising from a hollow, and presently reached a group of peasants, both men and women, armed with cudgels.

We got out and went up to them. The men sat roasting potatoes, and laughing and talking with the women.

Damian was there too; and when we arrived the people got up, and Damian led them away to place them in the circle we had made the day before. They went along in single file, men and women, thirty in all. The snow was so deep that we could only see

them from their waists upwards. They turned into the forest, and my friend and I followed in their track.

Though they had trodden a path, walking was difficult; but, on the other hand, it was impossible to fall: it was like walking between two walls of snow.

We went on in this way for nearly half a mile, when all at once we saw Damian coming from another direction—running towards us on his snow-shoes, and beckoning us to join him. We went towards him, and he showed us where to stand. I took my place, and looked round me.

To my left were tall fir trees, between the trunks of which I could see a good way, and, like a black patch just visible behind the trees, I could see a beater. In front of me was a thicket of young firs, about as high as a man, their branches weighed down and stuck together with snow. Through this copse ran a path thickly covered with snow, and leading straight up to where I stood. The thicket stretched away to the right of me, and ended in a small glade, where I could see Damian placing my comrade.

I examined both my guns, and considered where I had better stand. Three steps behind me was a tall fir.

'That's where I'll stand,' thought I, 'and then I can lean my second gun against the tree'; and I moved towards the tree, sinking up to my knees in the snow at each step. I trod the snow down, and made a clearance about a yard square, to stand on. One gun I kept in my hand; the other, ready cocked, I placed leaning up against the tree. Then I unsheathed and replaced my dagger, to make sure that I could draw it easily in case of need.

Just as I had finished these preparations, I heard Damian shouting in the forest:

'He's up! He's up!'

And as soon as Damian shouted, the peasants round the circle all replied in their different voices.

'Up, up, up! Ou! Ou! Ou!' shouted the men.

'Ay! Ay! Ay!' screamed the women in high-pitched tones.

The bear was inside the circle, and as Damian drove him on, the people all round kept shouting. Only my friend and I stood silent and motionless, waiting for the bear to come towards us. As I stood gazing and listening, my heart beat violently. I trembled, holding my gun fast.

'Now, now,' I thought. 'He will come suddenly. I shall aim, fire, and he will drop——'

Suddenly, to my left, but at a distance, I heard something falling on the snow. I looked between the tall fir trees, and, some fifty paces off, behind the trunks, saw something big and black. I took aim and waited, thinking:

'Won't he come any nearer?'

As I waited I saw him move his ears, turn, and go back; and then I caught a glimpse of the whole of him in profile. He was an immense brute. In my excitement, I fired, and heard my bullet go 'flop' against a tree. Peering through the smoke, I saw my bear scampering back into the circle, and disappearing among the trees.

'Well,' thought I. 'My chance is lost. He won't come back to me. Either my comrade will shoot him, or he will escape through the line of beaters. In any case he won't give me another chance.'

I reloaded my gun, however, and again stood listening. The peasants were shouting all round, but to the right, not far from where my comrade

stood, I heard a woman screaming in a frenzied voice:

‘Here he is! Here he is! Come here, come here! Oh! Oh! Ay! Ay!’

Evidently she could see the bear. I had given up expecting him, and was looking to the right at my comrade. All at once I saw Damian with a stick in his hand, and without his snow-shoes, running along a footpath towards my friend. He crouched down beside him, pointing his stick as if aiming at something, and then I saw my friend raise his gun and aim in the same direction. Crack! He fired.

‘There,’ thought I. ‘He has killed him.’

But I saw that my comrade did not run towards the bear. Evidently he had missed him, or the shot had not taken full effect.

‘The bear will get away,’ I thought. ‘He will go back, but he won’t come a second time towards me.—But what is that?’

Something was coming towards me like a whirlwind, snorting as it came; and I saw the snow flying up quite near me. I glanced straight before me, and there was the bear, rushing along the path through the thicket right at me, evidently beside himself with fear. He was hardly half a dozen paces off, and I could see the whole of him—his black chest and enormous head with a reddish patch. There he was, blundering straight at me, and scattering the snow about as he came. I could see by his eyes that he did not see me, but, mad with fear, was rushing blindly along; and his path led him straight at the tree under which I was standing. I raised my gun and fired. He was almost upon me now, and I saw that I had missed. My bullet had gone past him, and he did not even

hear me fire, but still came headlong towards me. I lowered my gun, and fired again, almost touching his head. Crack! I had hit, but not killed him!

He raised his head, and laying his ears back, came at me, showing his teeth.

I snatched at my other gun, but almost before I had touched it, he had flown at me and, knocking me over into the snow, had passed right over me.

'Thank goodness, he has left me,' thought I.

I tried to rise, but something pressed me down, and prevented my getting up. The bear's rush had carried him past me, but he had turned back, and had fallen on me with the whole weight of his body. I felt something heavy weighing me down, and something warm above my face, and I realized that he was drawing my whole face into his mouth. My nose was already in it, and I felt the heat of it, and smelt his blood. He was pressing my shoulders down with his paws so that I could not move; all I could do was to draw my head down towards my chest away from his mouth, trying to free my nose and eyes, while he tried to get his teeth into them. Then I felt that he had seized my forehead just under the hair with the teeth of his lower jaw, and the flesh below my eyes with his upper jaw, and was closing his teeth. It was as if my face were being cut with knives. I struggled to get away, while he made haste to close his jaws like a dog gnawing. I managed to twist my face away, but he began drawing it again into his mouth.

'Now,' thought I, 'my end has come!'

Then I felt the weight lifted, and looking up, I saw that he was no longer there. He had jumped off me and run away.

When my comrade and Damian had seen the bear

knock me down and begin worrying me, they rushed to the rescue. My comrade, in his haste, blundered, and instead of following the trodden path, ran into the deep snow and fell down. While he was struggling out of the snow, the bear was gnawing at me. But Damian just as he was, without a gun, and with only a stick in his hand, rushed along the path shouting:

‘He’s eating the master! He’s eating the master!’

And, as he ran, he called to the bear:

‘Oh, you idiot! What are you doing? Leave off! Leave off!’

The bear obeyed him, and leaving me ran away. When I rose, there was as much blood on the snow as if a sheep had been killed, and the flesh hung in rags above my eyes, though in my excitement I felt no pain.

My comrade had come up by this time, and the other people collected round: they looked at my wound, and put snow on it. But I, forgetting about my wounds, only asked:

‘Where’s the bear? Which way has he gone?’

Suddenly I heard:

‘Here he is! Here he is!’

And we saw the bear again running at us. We seized our guns, but before any one had time to fire, he had run past. He had grown ferocious, and wanted to gnaw me again, but seeing so many people he took fright. We saw by his track that his head was bleeding, and we wanted to follow him up; but, as my wounds had become very painful, we went, instead, to the town to find a doctor.

The doctor stitched up my wounds with silk, and they soon began to heal.

A month later we went to hunt that bear again, but



I did not get a chance of finishing him. He would not come out of the circle, but went round and round, growling in a terrible voice.

Damian killed him. The bear's lower jaw had been broken, and one of his teeth knocked out by my bullet.

He was a huge creature, and had splendid black fur.

I had him stuffed, and he now lies in my room. The wounds on my forehead healed up so that the scars can scarcely be seen.

RT. HON. J. E. B. SEELY  
(LORD MOTTISTONE)

*An Adventurous Voyage*

*From ADVENTURE*

A FRENCH ship was wrecked on our coast at home, in a great storm on the 19th October, 1891, at the top of high water. The lifeboat was launched, but the tide was so high that the second big wave caught the boat before she had gathered way and hurled her back on the beach at the base of the cliff. None of the crew were drowned, but the boat was in such a position that it was impossible to launch her again until the tide receded. I did what any other swimmer would have attempted, and, my luck still holding, was successful in reaching the vessel with a line. For my share in rescuing the survivors, I received the French gold medal of honour, followed in due course by the War Office order to wear it: 'When in uniform on the right breast'; but the other consequences of my adventure were not so pleasant. I suffered severely in health from the prolonged exposure, and from having a rib driven into my lung by a piece of floating wreckage, and was told that a long sea voyage was advisable. Accordingly I made a plan with Tom Conolly and Lord Burford to go round the world. Our benevolent parents fell in with this view, and we set sail for the Cape, Tasmania, New Zealand, Cape Horn, Rio, and so home. Our ship was the *Kaikoura*, belonging to the New Zealand Shipping Company, a vessel of a little under 3,000 tons, designed to sail, and steam,

rigged as a barque, with great masts and spars capable of driving her in strong winds faster than she or most other vessels of that day could steam. The plan was to steam most of the way to the Cape, setting sail when possible, and then to sail along the Prevailing Course of Westerly Wind—the Roaring Forties—all the way from the Cape to Cape Horn, calling at Tasmania and New Zealand on the way. The captain was a famous seaman, Lieutenant Crutchley of the Royal Naval Reserve, who had circumnavigated the globe almost more times than he could remember. He was very proud of his ship, and handled her in masterly fashion; he had need of all his seamanship before the voyage was over.

Tom and I having spent much of our youth in yachting and boat sailing, obtained permission from the captain to go aloft and help with the sails. Burford, who was afraid of nothing else, never got over the dizziness which comes to some people at considerable heights. Amongst the passengers was an amiable gentleman of considerable wealth, who was taking the voyage for his health. When nearing Cape Town, in order to amuse us two lads, he betted us £25 to £5 each that we would not act as able seamen for the rest of the voyage. The captain and the chief officer readily agreed and the bet was taken. Although neither of us had much ready cash to spare, I doubt if we would have taken on the job for twenty times the money if we had known the extremity of the hardship involved. We were allotted our watch and our stations aloft, and were treated in every way as ordinary members of the crew; being allowed, however, to retain our cabins and have our meals in the saloon so long as our duties as A.B.'s were not interfered with.

We anchored in Table Bay after a prosperous voyage. Never shall I forget the thrill of the first view of Table Mountain in the morning light. Cape Town seemed to me to be almost the most beautiful and romantic place on the world's surface. I was to see it again nine years later, during the period of the South African War, and much of my political life was to be bound up with South Africa.

From the Cape to Tasmania the Great Circle, that is to say the shortest distance between the two points, lies deep in the Arctic Circle, where no ship can penetrate. But although the shortest route is barred the further south one can go the less the distance to be travelled; moreover, the great westerly winds that roar round the South Seas tend to be stronger the further south one goes. Captain Crutchley decided to take the most southerly course, and very soon we found ourselves bowling along with all plain sail set before a forty knot wind. We were constantly making and shortening sail according as the wind moderated or increased, and we made regularly from ten to thirteen knots. Steam was kept up and the propeller revolving to avoid the drag; but for days on end we had what is known as 'negative slip,' that is to say, we were out-running the propeller. We sighted one or two steamers, and passed them easily, as the high rollers, of which our sailing ship made nothing, were a great bother to them. As we got further east and south the wind increased to a strong gale, and about ten days out from Cape Town we ran into a big storm. It was a famous gale, well described by Lubbock in his account of the Australian Wool Clippers of that day. Many ships were lost in the South Indian Ocean, and none escaped without some damage. I

remember one day Captain Crutchley and the chief officer tried to estimate the height of the waves. We recollected that Sir Charles Ross, in one of his Arctic voyages, estimated that the great waves were not more than thirty-six feet high. Certainly these were much higher. From the deck and from aloft various methods were tried to ascertain their true height; the lowest estimate was fifty-six feet, the highest seventy feet. Such great mountains of water were an awe-inspiring sight, towering higher and higher astern—apparently the height of the top gallant yards. It appeared certain that each one must break on the ship and send her to the bottom; yet, all except one passed under her taffrail as she lifted to the oncoming sea. One night, at the height of the storm, having helped in further shortening sail I went down to my little deck cabin and slept in my clothes. I woke to find myself under water with my head up against the cabin roof. In another moment I found myself swept out of the cabin and floating on the sea with the ship sliding along below me. I managed to clutch the port after-rigging with both hands, and in a few seconds, which seemed like an hour, most of the water drained away and I jumped down on to the deck. I heard the boatswain's whistle and shouts of 'All hands aloft,' as I ran forward. A great wave had broken on our poop, and almost immediately after this disaster the wind had veered suddenly to the north-north-west; we were lying over at an angle of about forty degrees, with some of our sails aback, but still forging ahead at a great speed.

I climbed up the ratlines on the weather side for about twenty feet; then the violence of the wind was such that it blew me against the rigging so hard that

I could not push myself away to take a further step. The sailor just below bawled out to me to get on. When I said: 'I can't,' with his knife he pricked the calf of my leg, which angered me so much as to give me sufficient strength to push my body away from the rigging and continue the upward climb. He was a splendid fellow, this seaman, and a great friend; my place on the yard was next to his, and I am sure I should have fallen often if it had not been for his help. I reached the top gallant yard all right and started to climb along it, as I had so often done before; but it was much more difficult than I had ever known it, because of the angle at which we lay. However, I got to my place and we set to work to try and stow sail. Truth compels me to relate that although our wealthy friend paid the bet I certainly did not earn it that night—I just fixed my legs between the yard and the foot rope and held tight on to the jackstay. I did hand my neighbour a gasket or two, but beyond that I am afraid I was of no use. The wind was terrific, no doubt over eighty miles an hour. The darkness was intense, there were scurries of snow and sleet, and being wet through, I was shivering with cold.

The only head-sail we were carrying was a small fore-gallant staysail, in which the skipper was a great believer in rough weather, as it helped in steering the ship in a heavy following sea. While we were aloft this sail started to flap with a noise like thunder, and all at once was blown clean out of the bolt ropes. I see it now like a white ghost floating away over the sea. The release from pressure caused the mast to whip in an extraordinary way, and my friend Tom was shaken off the yard. He had a truly miraculous escape. He was well out over the sea at a height of one hundred

and twenty feet, without any possible chance of rescue if he fell in; no ship could round-to in such a sea and hope to live. But when he had already fallen some fifteen or twenty feet he clutched a swinging rope. If it had been a taut rope of any kind of course he could not have held on at the speed he was falling. But it so happened that it was a buntline, which gradually eased up as he held on. Finally he was suspended at the end of about forty feet of rope. As the ship rolled he caught the ratlines on the starboard side and held on.

We stowed sail—or rather the others stowed sail—and climbed down. The first streak of dawn was beginning to show as I made my way to the captain's cabin. The pumps had been set going, and although we had shipped a great deal of water, there was no immediate danger. The captain produced a bottle of gin and served out a tot to the chief officer, who had come to report to him, to Burford, Tom and myself. In handing back the bottle I lost the cork and started to rummage on the floor for it. 'What is the matter with you, my boy?' said the captain. 'I am looking for the cork, sir,' I replied. He roared out, 'To hell with your corks! What does a man want with a cork on a night like this?' He was an abstemious man, but the occasion was no ordinary one.

When it was light we went round the ship. The sea which had pooped us, and which had incidentally floated me out of my cabin, had done a great deal of damage. At the after end of the ship there was a poop deck, about six feet above the main deck, which had accommodation for about twenty men, and was supported by four rows of iron standards, about as thick as one's wrist. This deck had been smashed absolutely flat down on to the deck below, the iron

standards being twisted into corkscrews and other fantastic shapes. Some had forced their way through the poop deck, and others were coiled up between the two. We had shipped a great deal of water, and although the pumps got the better of it during the day, the situation was still of some danger. To make matters worse, quantities of ice appeared ahead on our port beam to the north of us. Lubbock describes how in this year the icebergs of the southern seas were found far to the north of their usual limit. The captain's only comment when we surveyed these awe-inspiring flat-topped bergs was, 'What a lucky thing I took a southerly course! We shall leave all the worst of the ice on our port hand.' So indeed it proved. As the afternoon wore on it cleared up, and from the crow's nest we could see about twenty miles in all directions. To our left was a continuous row of icebergs, the loom of more ice could be discerned to our right, but ahead of us lay a great lane with not a berg in sight. The wind backed again to the west and, though a whole gale was still blowing, the sea moderated somewhat. We had no more misadventures, and after touching at Hobart, arrived in due course at Wellington, in New Zealand.



## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

LAWRENCE, THOMAS EDWARD (1888-1935), popularly known as 'Lawrence of Arabia', became an archaeologist while at Jesus College, Oxford. He spent most of his years before the Great War in the Near East, travelling and excavating in Syria, Egypt, and Arabia. During the war he was sent from Cairo to help the Sherif of Mecca in his revolt against the Turks, and was extraordinarily successful in his many daring exploits among the Arabs. Ultimately he was transferred to Lord Allenby's staff, and entered Damascus in 1918 with the leading Arab forces. He wrote a narrative of all these experiences, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (i.e. Cairo, Smyrna, Constantinople, Beyrout, Aleppo, Damascus, Medina), which was printed in a limited edition in 1926. A new edition for general circulation was published in 1935. An abridgement of this great work was issued in 1927 under the title *Revolt in the Desert*. His translation of Homer's *Odyssey* was published for the general reader by the Oxford University Press in 1935.

Lawrence was not satisfied that Arab interests had been adequately recognized in the Peace Treaty, so he renounced his military rank, changed his surname by deed-poll to that of Shaw and joined the Air Force as an aircraftsman. He was killed in a motor-cycle accident in 1935.

KINGLAKE, ALEXANDER WILLIAM (1809-91), made an extended journey in the Near East in 1834-5. In company with Lord Pollington, friend of his school days at Eton, he went overland as far as Smyrna. From Smyrna he continued his journey, attended only by a dragoman, to Cyprus and Syria and thence across the desert to Egypt: thence, retracing his steps to Syria, he crossed by sea to Satalieh whence he finally took ship for home. *Eöthen* (= from the East), Kinglake's charming account of this journey published in 1844, had long before his death taken undisputed

rank among the Victorian classics. He also wrote the standard history of the Crimean War.

LEWIS, CECIL (b. 1898) 'is one of the very few flying aces who survived the war and the only one, as far as I know, who has since developed considerable literary ability. He began to fly at sixteen and was only twenty when the war ended. Since then he has done many things, worked at the B.B.C., written film scenarios and become an expert on television' (*The New Statesman and Nation*).

WHYMPER, EDWARD (1840-1911), was by profession a wood engraver and artist. He was a pioneer of Alpine climbing. His first successful ascent of the Matterhorn by the north-east ridge in July 1865, his seventh attempt, was followed by a disastrous descent, three of his party being killed. He related his experiences in *Scrambles in the Alps* (1871). Later, Whymper visited Greenland, the Andes, and Canada. He was the designer of the 'Whymper' tent for mountaineering purposes, and the compiler of handbooks to Chamonix and Zermatt. He died at Chamonix.

MELVILLE, HERMAN (1819-91), was born in New York, of mixed Dutch and English stock. At the age of 18 he shipped as cabin-boy on a vessel trading to Liverpool. Then he took to sea again on a whaling vessel, *Dolly*, and in her he sailed round Cape Horn. In the Pacific he and a comrade deserted in the Marquesas Islands, owing to harsh treatment by the captain. They intended to go to the friendly Happar tribe, but found themselves in the adjoining valley of the cannibal Typees. There they were kept prisoner for four months before being rescued. Melville tells the full story in *Typee* (1846). Further South Sea adventures are to be found in his *Omoo* (1847). His greatest work is *Moby Dick* (1851), the epic of Captain Ahab's attempted vengeance on Moby Dick, the particularly cunning and ferocious whale which had caused the Captain to lose his leg.

PATTERSON, LT.-COL. JOHN HENRY, was born in 1867. During the Boer War he commanded a battalion of Imperial Yeomanry, was mentioned three times in dispatches, and won the D.S.O. In the Great War he was in command of various Irish battalions in Egypt, Gallipoli, and Palestine. In addition to *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo* (1907) he wrote *In the Grip of the Nyika* (1909), *With the Zionists in Gallipoli* (1916), and *With the Judaeans in the Palestine Campaign* (1922).

WOOD, THOMAS, the son of a sea-captain, was born in Chorley, Lancs., in 1892. He is a Doctor of Music of Oxford, and after the war became director of music at Tonbridge School. Later (1924-9) he was lecturer and Precentor at Exeter College, Oxford. He has published a number of choral and orchestral and other musical works, has written a book called *Music of Boyhood*, and edited the *Oxford Song Book*, volume ii. Music it was that took him to Australia. He was sent out on a musical examining tour, and stayed two years, observing, meeting people, travelling, and eventually writing his experiences in *Cobbers*, the most friendly of travel books though filled with the buccaneering spirit. *True Thomas*, his autobiography, gives a clear if limited picture of the activity of the interests of his mind.

COURTAULD, AUGUSTINE, is the eldest son of Mr. Samuel Augustine Courtauld, head of Messrs. Courtaulds, Ltd. As an undergraduate he went with J. M. Wordie on the Cambridge Expedition to East Greenland in 1926. He was a member of the British Arctic Air Route Expedition of 1930-1. In 1932 he was awarded the Polar Medal. He was second in command of the British East Greenland Expedition of 1935-6.

YEATS-BROWN, FRANCIS, son of H.B.M.'s Consul-General in Genoa, was born at Genoa in 1886. He was educated at Harrow and Sandhurst. He has served in various capacities in the Indian Army. During the European War he served with the 5th Lancers in France and with the R.F.C. in Mesopotamia. He was a prisoner of war in Turkey from

November 1915 until his escape in 1918. In addition to numerous articles in various periodicals he is the author of *Bengal Lancer* (which has been most successfully filmed) (1930); *Golden Horn* (in which *inter alia* he gives a very graphic account of his captivity and escape) (1932); *Dogs of War!* (1934), and *Lancer at Large* (1936).

FAIRBRIDGE, KINGSLEY (1885-1924), was by birth a South African whose father was a land surveyor to the Cape Government. He spent his boyhood in Rhodesia, travelling over the veld wherever his father's duties took the family. In these pioneer days young Fairbridge met Cecil Rhodes. Fourteen years later he was at Oxford, one of the 160 men, 'Rhodes Scholars' as they were called, who owed their university education to the generous provision of the great South African's will. While at Oxford he organized a Farm School in West Australia where children from the slums of the East End of London might be trained as farmers. But Fairbridge did not live to see the fulfilment of his scheme. In his childhood he had contracted malaria. The great 'Grey Wolf' dragged down the young idealist who had worked so hard to solve the imperial problem of how to combine the work of Child Rescue with that of Emigration.

TOLSTOY, COUNT LEO (1828-1910), was a Russian nobleman, heir to large estates. He joined the army and fought both in the Caucasus and in the Crimea. During this period in his life he wrote some magnificent war sketches called *Sevastopol*. After leaving the army he devoted himself to literature. In addition to his very long novels, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, he wrote many beautiful short stories, twenty-three of which are to be found in a volume in the 'World's Classics' series. Towards the close of his life Tolstoy renounced all his estates and money, and lived the life of a poor peasant on the land. It was only natural that the Russian Imperial Government should have disapproved of and censored his outspoken writings; but his

power and influence were so great that the Government did not dare to interfere with him.

MOTTISTONE, LORD, probably better known as Maj.-Gen. Rt. Hon. J. E. B. Seely, D.S.O., was born in 1868. He was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, before being called to the Bar in 1897. As a soldier he served with the Imperial Yeomanry in the Boer War and gained the D.S.O. For his part in the Great European War he was awarded the C.B. and the C.M.G. As a parliamentarian he has held various government offices, including that of Secretary of State for War (1912-14), Minister for Munitions (1918), and President of the Air Council (1919). He is the author of *Adventure* (1930), *Fear and Be Slain* (1931), *Launch* (1932), *For Ever England* (1932), and *My Horse Warrior* (1934).

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